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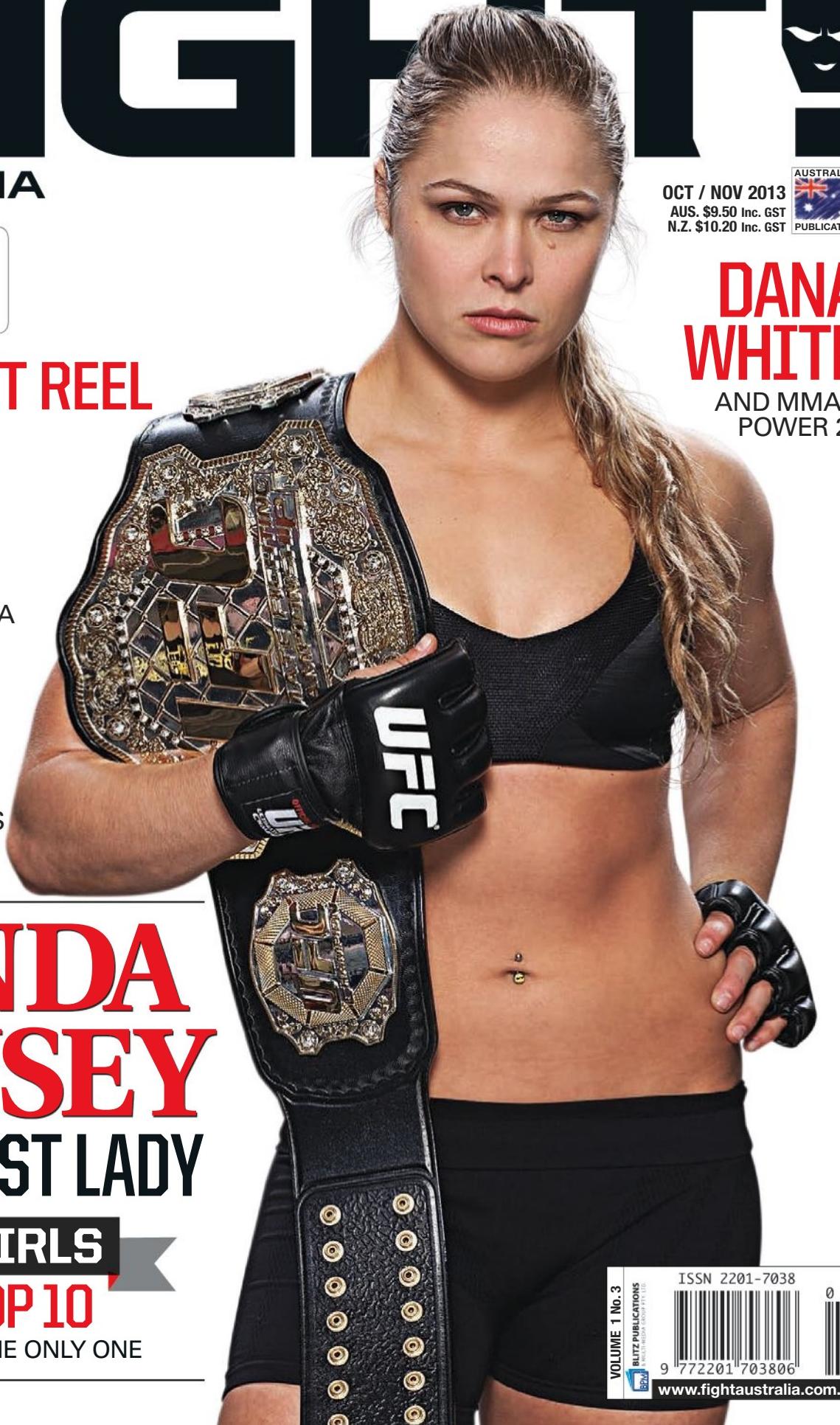
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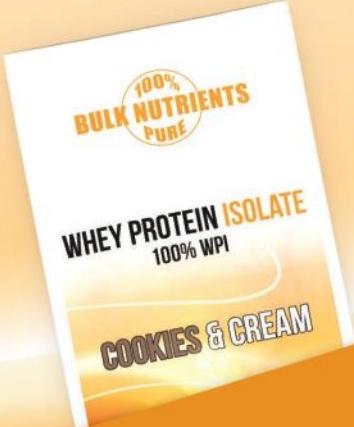
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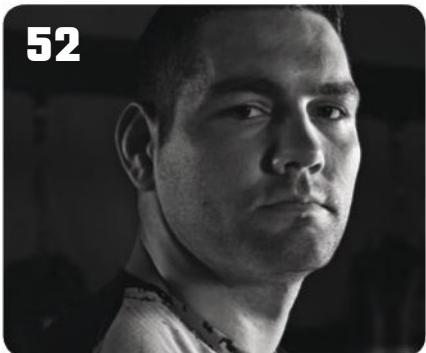
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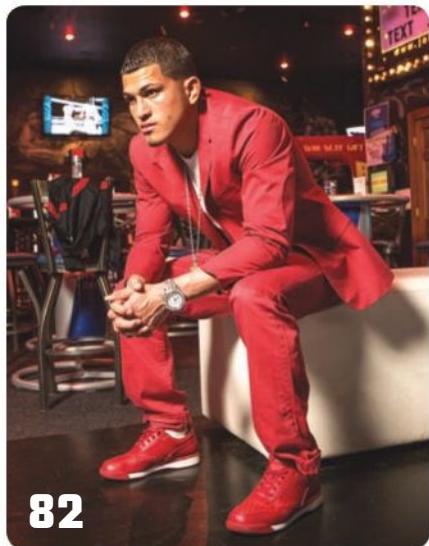
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HELP ME, RONDA

It's all happening. Firstly, I hope you all like our very first female cover, with none other than the reigning UFC Champion herself, Ronda Rousey. Who would have thought? It wasn't so long ago that our old friend Dana White promised us all that women would never fight in the UFC. Yet here we are – the living proof is on our front cover. And not only is she the champion, but now she is heading up the coaching on the latest series of *The Ultimate Fighter*. You can't get much more in the UFC than that.

But you have to give credit to old man White, at least he knows when he's wrong. He was man enough to swallow his pride and sign on Rousey at the drop of a hat.

We managed to secure an exclusive interview with the lady champion, and from all accounts it sounds like she's a bit nervous about the upcoming *TUF* series. Which just makes me want to watch it even more...

This issue is also the last chance you have to win our amazing Las Vegas prize. You won't find another competition like this anywhere else. Full flights, accommodation and access to all the UFC Expo events you can handle – not to mention the hottest tickets in town to watch your favourite fighters up close in the Octagon. So jump online and follow the instructions and you might find yourself jetting off to Vegas before you know it.

And just to top things off, this issue we are launching our brand new smartphone app In-Site. You can download the app for free right now for your phone or tablet and be viewing extra content immediately. We are talking free videos, articles, photos and more content than ever before. Or, maybe you want to show us some of your own content? Then use the app to upload your videos and images and you could be part of *FIGHT!* now!



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Publisher
Silvio Morelli

Managing Editor
Ben Stone

Editor
Jarrah Loh
Email: jarrah@blitzmag.com.au

Art Director
Javie D'Souza

Graphic Designers
Adam Summers, James Steer,
Zeenia Lakhani, Adibowo Rusli,
Lysha Moniz, Diep Nguyen,
Jonathan Rudolph

National Sales Manager
Keith Rozario

Advertising Enquiries
Nicholas Maranville
Business Development Manager
Ph: (03) 9574 8999
Email: nicholas@blitzmag.com.au

Marketing Manager
Natalina Morelli
Email: marketing@blitzmag.com.au

Web Editor
Boon Mark Souphanh

Editorial Assistant
Molly Morelli

Photographers
John O'Neill, Penghuynh,
Paul Thatcher, Josh Hedges



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WE ARE CONTACTABLE
By phone: (03) 9574 8460
By fax: (03) 9574 8899
PO Box 4075, Mulgrave, 3170
Email: customerservice@blitzmag.com.au
Web: www.fightaustralia.com.au

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RONDA ROUSEY

At just 26 years old Rousey has already written herself into the history books. The dual Olympian became the first female American to win a judo medal at an Olympics, claiming the bronze in Beijing in 2008. And last year she became the first ever women's UFC champion. However, Rousey's long list of achievements did come after a rough start.

"I didn't really speak coherently until I was six years old," Rousey explains. "I didn't really know I had any problems, I just remember being frustrated all the time that people couldn't understand me.

"My mum says that I would try and repeat myself several times, but whatever I was trying to say would come out as gibberish. I would get so mad that I would just hit people, so it's kind of ironic that now I'm known for speaking my mind a lot, when it used to be that no one could understand a word

out of my mouth. Now people want to hear me talk all the time."

Fighting is in Rousey's blood. Her mother was the first American to win the World Judo Championships and despite some reservations about Ronda joining the fighting game, she was the perfect person to mould her into the champion she would become.

"When I first wanted to do judo, she was resistant of the idea, but as time went on she asked, 'do you really want to do this? Do you want to win the Olympics?' and I said, 'yes I do', so she treated me from the very beginning like she was training an Olympic champion.

"She was extremely hard on me. There were days when I thought that she was terrible and mean and trying to ruin my life, but there is no nice way to turn you into the toughest woman in the world."

Ronda qualified for the Athens Olympics at just 17 years of age, the youngest judo competitor at the Olympics that year. Four years on she

returned to the Olympics a stronger and more determined competitor and walked away with a bronze medal, but quickly realised she had fallen victim to the same problem many Olympic athletes face once their four years of effort are over — what now?

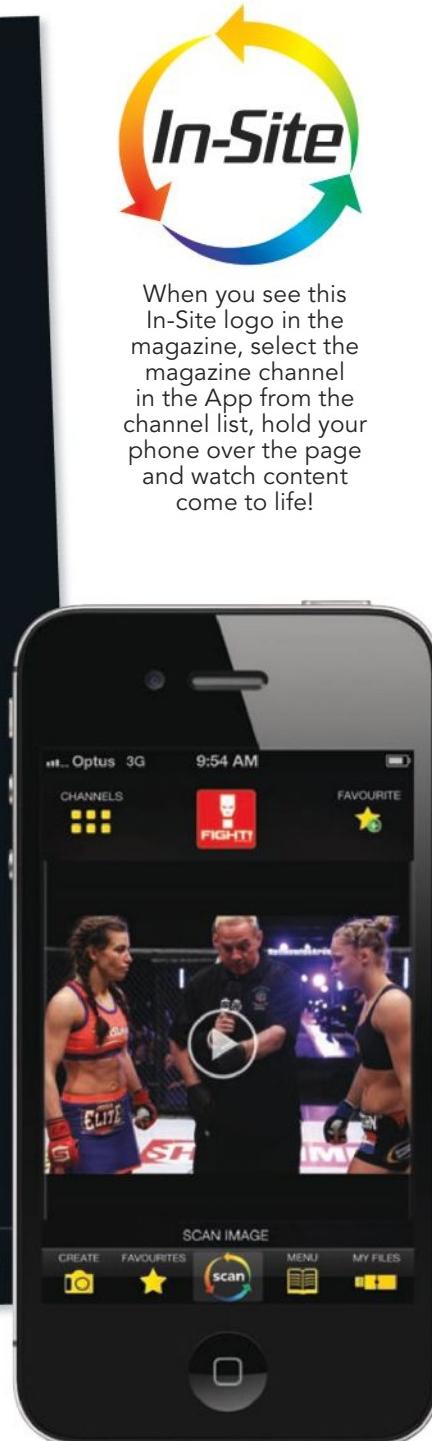
"The day I won was surprisingly happy — I didn't really expect myself to be so happy. I felt like I was in love with everybody in the room, but when I got home it was like I returned to real life. The reality was, I had an Olympic medal but no education and no experience and the only money I made from the Olympic bronze medal was enough to pay for half of a 2005 Honda Accord, so it was kind of a rude awakening.

"I struggled, but I was too stubborn to really ask for help, so I started working three jobs. I was trying to find ways just to get by, but I've been fighting for too long to be easily defeated by any situation."

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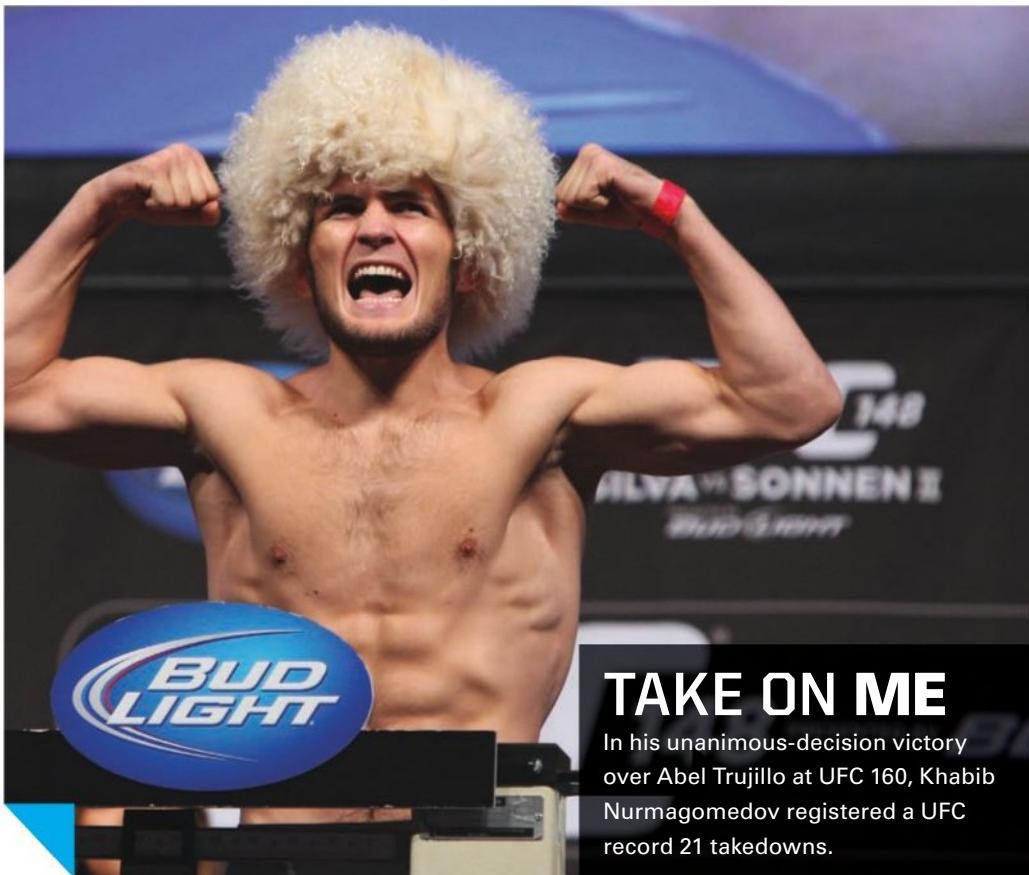




TOE JAM

Head trainer John Hackleman was the man behind Chuck Liddell's famous painted toenails. He convinced Liddell to paint his nails a decade ago, but he can't persuade pupils Court McGee or Glover Teixeira to follow suit.

THE TOES



TAKE ON ME

In his unanimous-decision victory over Abel Trujillo at UFC 160, Khabib Nurmagomedov registered a UFC record 21 takedowns.



LOSING STEAM

With Miesha Tate stepping in for injured Cat Zingano against Ronda Rousey, it will mark the fourth time this year a fighter coming off a loss will fight for a UFC title.

PERFECT SCORE

Four members of the 2008 US Olympic Freestyle Wrestling team have a combined MMA record of 29–0 — Daniel Cormier (12–0), Ben Askren (11–0), Henry Cejudo (4–0), and Steve Mocco (2–0).

Sweet Science

While waiting for Bellator Season Six Featherweight Tournament winner Daniel Straus to heal from a broken hand, Bellator Featherweight Champion Pat Curran is expected to make his pro boxing debut soon.



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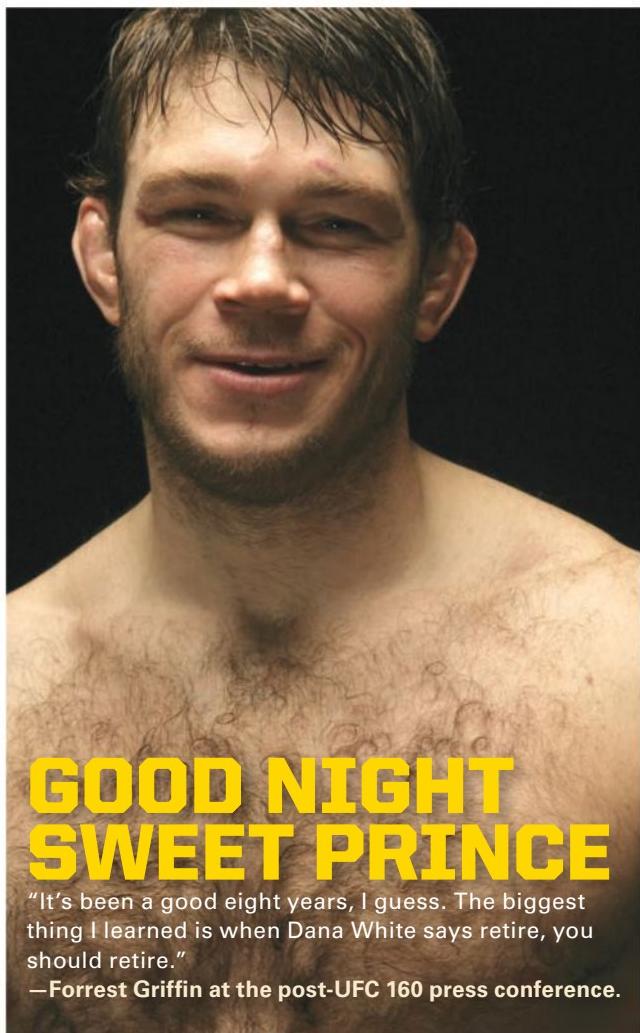
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GOOD NIGHT SWEET PRINCE

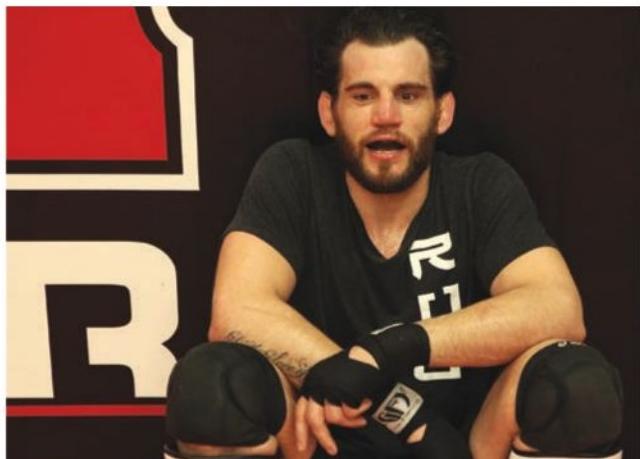
"It's been a good eight years, I guess. The biggest thing I learned is when Dana White says retire, you should retire."

—Forrest Griffin at the post-UFC 160 press conference.

JOB PROMOTION

"It's nice fighting for an organisation that is promoting me instead of trying to hold me back and put me down."

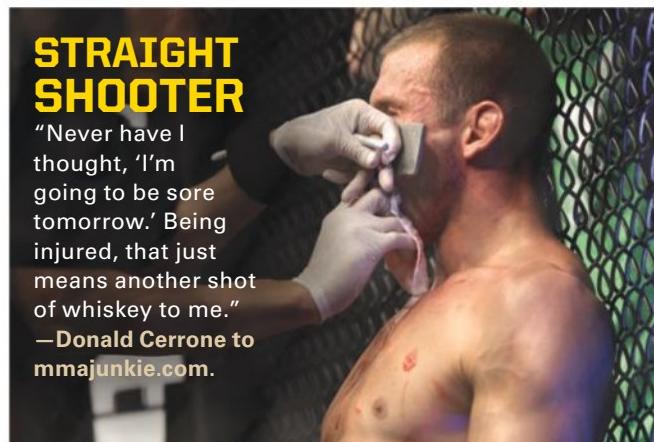
—Jon Fitch to bleacherreport.com.



STRAIGHT SHOOTER

"Never have I thought, 'I'm going to be sore tomorrow.' Being injured, that just means another shot of whiskey to me."

—Donald Cerrone to mmajunkie.com.



BUSINESS UP FRONT, PARTY IN THE BACK

"I have a long neck, and it helps to have some hair back there."

—Mike Pyle to bleacherreport.com.



MR TATE

"Miesha [Tate] by herself isn't that bad. Miesha in combination with her pet boyfriend, Mr Tate, is frickin' something else. She's different when he's around. I can't stand him. I really feel like if she wasn't with him, she would fight better and she would be a better person. He's always glued to her hip, because if he's not next to her, no one ever notices him."

—Ronda Rousey to mmajunkie.com.

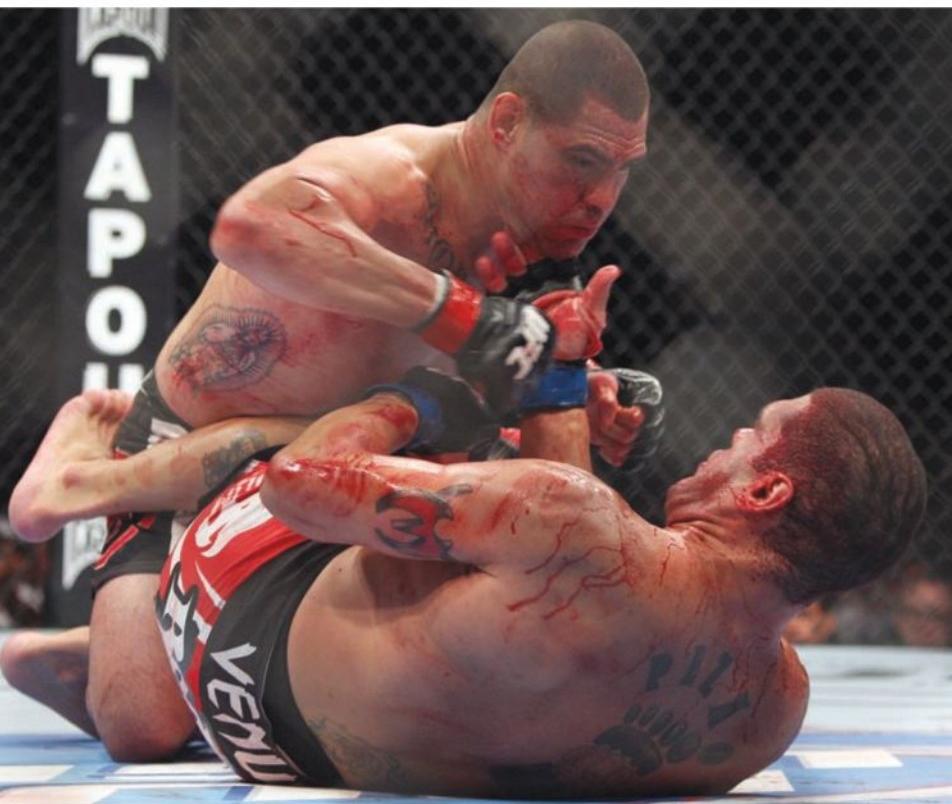




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BIGFOOT FACTS

In two fights against Cain Velasquez, Antonio 'Bigfoot' Silva landed a total of five strikes. He ate 71 punches from Velasquez.

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In his spare time, Rashad Evans likes to torment his Blackzilian teammates by using his iPhone to superimpose unflattering pics of them. We expect Blackzilians Michael Johnson, Anthony Johnson and Tyrone Spong to seek revenge.



SAY IT! SAY IT! SAY MATTÉ!

UFC on Fuel TV 10 set the record for submission finishes for a single UFC event. Eight submissions occurred on the card, topping the previous total of six that was held by three events.

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FULL OF GARBAGE

"Anybody who accepts that [UFC fighters are overpaid] as a reality of the sport is sad and pathetic. I hope this isn't the reality of the sport. If it is, I should probably go do something else, like empty trash cans. I'd make more money than I do now."

—Tim Kennedy on
GrappleTalk Podcast

NO PRIZE FOR 2ND

"They [Bellator] are never going to be as good as us. This is what we do 24 hours a day, seven days a week...that's the difference between us and everybody else. Nobody's ever going to outwork us or out hustle us. That's just never going to happen. It's impossible."

—Dana White to
mmajunkie.com



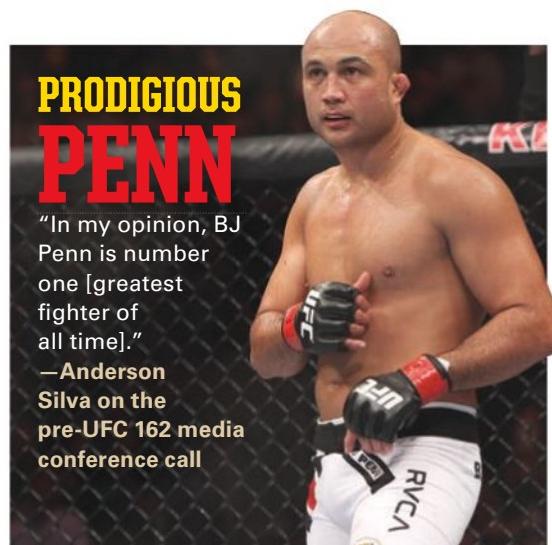
IN THE IMMORTAL WORDS OF...

"If I go in there the best I can be, I know I'd destroy GSP. When I come in against GSP, I'm going in to take the belt from him, I'm not going to play around with the world title on the line. I'm 110 per cent confident, if I show up at my best, he does not stand a chance in hell against me."

—Matt Brown to
bleacherreport.com

PRODIGIOUS PENN

"In my opinion, BJ Penn is number one [greatest fighter of all time]."
—Anderson Silva on the pre-UFC 162 media conference call



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5 MINUTES WITH

Alexander Gustafsson

BY DUANE FINLEY // PHOTO BY JUSTIN TRAPP & BAD BOY

You're known for succinct answers. Can we expect the same today?

Yes [laughing].

You have the biggest fight of your career coming up against Jon Jones at UFC 165 on 21 September. It wasn't clear you were going to get the next title shot after beating Shogun Rua. What did you think when you received the call?

It was a dream come true when I found out I was getting the fight. I couldn't believe it. I really cannot express it in words how I felt. It was absolutely a dream come true. I'm living the dream. I'm super motivated, and I'm ready to go.

You've recently picked up your Twitter game and started coming after Jones over social media. How would you rate your Twitter skills these days?

They're good. I was just trying to show a different side of myself and give fans a different look at Alexander Gustafsson. It's a sport, but it's also about putting on a show, and I just wanted to show I have some media skills, too.

Let's talk about your home country of Sweden.

Perfect. My specialty.

I know the Italians have a lock on the meatball market, but the Swedish bring it hard in that category as well. Where do you stand on the issue?

[Laughing] Meatballs? Meatballs are great and very popular in Sweden. But I have to admit, I had some Italian meatballs the other day, and they were even better.

Are you playing both sides here?

I'm just saying...I like them both. The Swedish and Italian meatballs are different, but they both taste very good. I'm a fan of both.

While Swedish influence in MMA



is growing, your country has already established dominance in America in the ready-to-assemble furniture market with IKEA. Are you a fan of the Swedish invasion IKEA has ignited?

It's one of the biggest stores in Sweden, for sure. But just like Americans, I curse and cry when I put together their furniture [laughing]. But it is a great store.

In geography class in America, we learn about fjords. I've always questioned their actual existence, but rumour has it there are fjords in Sweden. Is there any truth to this phenomenon?

Yeah, we have fjords. It's like a small river that runs between two mountains. They run down from the mountains and onto the landscapes in Sweden. Of course they are real.

We've watched you grow from prospect to title contender. What changes have you noticed about yourself along this journey?

I've learned that I need to work harder every day and never be satisfied. You can't be too comfortable. I have to keep pushing myself to be a better fighter every step of the way.

With your height and size, is cutting weight difficult?

I cut weight easily, but all the foods I have to cut out of my diet are all the good ones.

Do your Euro-techno-dancing skills come in handy in the cage?

I don't dance at all, but I do like listening to most music.

Are we going to have a new UFC Light Heavyweight Champion in September?

Yes.

Very succinct.

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NEW BLOOD

Mixed martial arts is the fastest growing sport in the world. It garners more attention and new fans daily. The emergence of so many new athletes sometimes makes it hard for fans to notice some of the fighters on the verge of making it to the next level. FIGHT! takes you deep inside the sport and presents you with some of the upcoming New Blood.

BY ZACH BROADHURST
// PHOTOS COURTESY AFC



● JAKE MATTHEWS

RECORD: 5-0

KEY VICTORIES: Luke Jumeau

WEIGHT CLASS: 170 lbs

AGE: 19

COUNTRY: Australia

NICKNAME: The Celtic Kid

Jake 'The Celtic Kid' Matthews was only 16 years old when he set foot in the ring for his first amateur fight. His opponent was in his early 20s and for the first of many times in his career, Jake's age made him the perceived underdog.

"It was a bit intimidating; it was a fairly big event," Matthews says. "But when I got going it was fine and I ended up winning by a head-kick knockout, so it was a good introduction."

Since that fight, Matthews has combined an unblessed 10-0 amateur record with an impressive professional record, each fight displaying the skill and intensity that has made him one of the most exciting young prospects in the country.

Now 19 years old, Jake has only just started to shake the doubters who, despite his notable record, still often considered him the underdog – predicted to succumb to age and experience.

"Most of my fights, I'm usually the underdog; even fights where I have had more fights than my opponent because of

my age I've been the underdog, but you just have to prove people wrong."

It was at AFC 5 this year that Jake emphatically proved age is no handicap. Against the highly fancied Luke Jumeau, Jake was dominant, controlling the pace and taking Jumeau to the ground at will. He was damaging with his ground-and-pound and eventually submitted Jumeau by rear-naked choke early in the second round.

"That was one of my favourite wins. Luke had just fought for a title at Legends FC, so I was wary of him as he was probably going to be the toughest guy I ever fought. I just trained for every aspect and I saw the opportunity to take him down and it all worked out. It was a very satisfying win."

Jake's next challenge in the ring came in the form of Dean Purdon at AFC 6 in the Welterweight tournament semi-final. Jake confidently had this to say this prior to the bout.

"For my next fight yours going to see nothing different, Its going to be relentlessness. I know Dean Purdon is pretty experienced but that's not going to faze me. I know I'm better in every aspect, stand up wrestling, jiu-jitsu, so I'm just going to push the pace and dictate the fight and where it goes, so expect another first round stoppage."

With maturity and dedication beyond his years, Jake is not your average teenager. While most young men his age are out and about trying to see how much

alcohol and trouble they can fit into a night, Jake is more likely found at home trying to better himself.

"That might be what they love, but when people ask me if it's hard dedicating myself, I say it's not, it's what I love doing. If I was going out with my friends a lot it would be hard, so, instead of that, I'll be training hard or studying and just staying focused on what I have to do."

It's this combination of dedication and skill that will hold Jake in good stead to achieve his future goals. Despite the UFC's relatively brief history, Jake wasn't even born when the first punches were thrown at UFC 1, but it's on the ultimate stage that Jake wants to prove himself.

"My dream is to one day be fighting in the UFC, to become the next Australian champion and become an idol to other Australian fighters."



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CARLOS DIEGO FERREIRA

RECORD: 7–0**KEY VICTORIES:** Carlo Prater**WEIGHT CLASS:** 155 lbs**AGE:** 28**COUNTRY:** United States **TWITTER:** @diegobjtx

In just two short years, Carlos Diego Ferreira has become one of the top lightweight prospects in Texas. Most recently, Ferreira headlined Legacy FC 20 and outshined UFC veteran Carlo Prater en route to a unanimous-decision victory in the evening's main event.

"I did what I was supposed to do," says Ferreira. "I wanted to exchange a little bit

and try out my stand-up, and I wanted to see if I had improved my game or if I needed to go to the ground. I did good with all of my skills, and I really liked my performance this time."

Heading into his first major headlining spot on live television could have intimidated a fighter with just six career bouts, but not so for Ferreira.

"I really don't think about it," he says. "When I get inside the cage, I really don't think about anything. I like to turn off everything and concentrate on the fight. I was excited to be on TV, but it wasn't really any different than my previous fights."

While his mindset might not have been different, Ferreira says that getting a chance to be part of Legacy has helped him expand greatly from his home base in southern Texas.

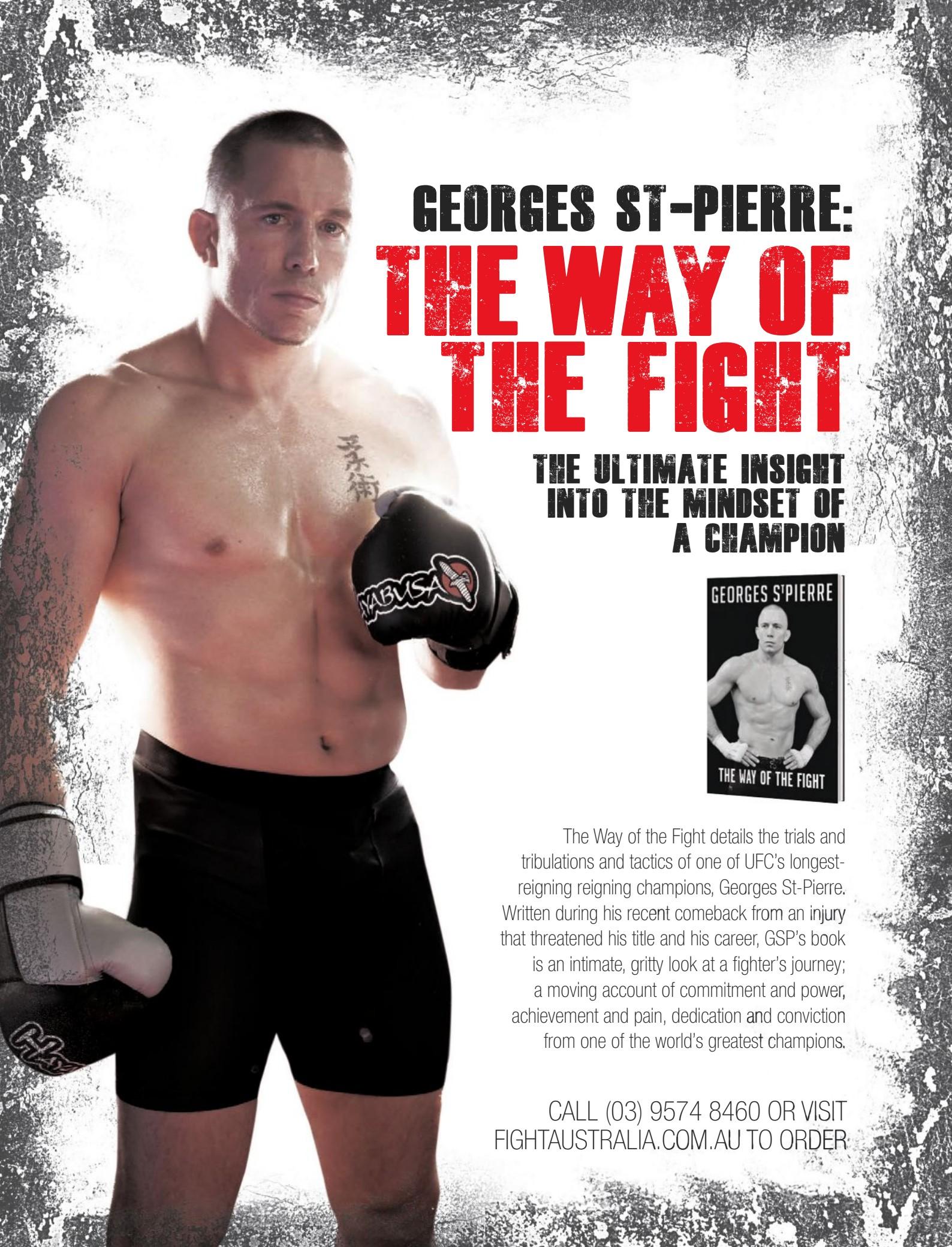
"I have a lot of fans here in the valley, but when I go to Corpus Christi, only a few guys I know go, but being on TV helps a lot with getting new fans," he says. "It helps get me exposure, and I really like to be on TV and show my work."

Even with enhanced exposure and a win over a well-known opponent, Ferreira refuses to let things go to his head. He knows he still has a lot of work to do to reach his goal.

"It feels pretty good, and I know Carlo is a really awesome fighter, but I know I have a lot more people I need to fight and beat," says Ferreira. "I don't think I'm the best. Right now, I don't have anything planned. I have two more fights with Legacy, so when it comes time to fight again in Legacy, I'll be ready. I really want to fight the best, and I know I have to fight better guys to get to the big show. I know I will get there one day." 

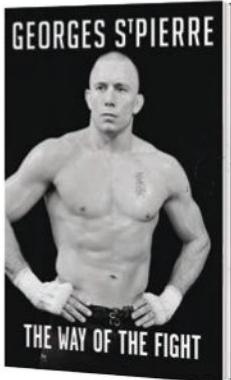


PHOTOS COURTESY OF MIKE CALIMBAS



GEORGES ST-PIERRE: **THE WAY OF THE FIGHT**

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Rousing Reception

Ronda Rousey

Ronda Rousey is unlike any fighter to ever set foot in the Octagon before her. She is the perfect storm of undoubtable skill, attention-grabbing marketability and an uncompromising will to win. In 2012 she ignited one of MMA's most intriguing rivalries when she called out then-Strikeforce Women's Bantamweight Champion Miesha Tate. It took just four minutes 27 seconds, and one dislocated elbow, for the girl nicknamed Rowdy to prove herself a rising star of the sport, and a year-and-a-half later that star burns brighter than ever before.

BY ZACH BROADHURST // PHOTOS BY ZUFFA

RONDA ROUSEY





At just 26 years old Rousey has already written herself into the history books. The dual Olympian became the first female American to win a judo medal at an Olympics, claiming the bronze in Beijing in 2008. And last year she became the first ever women's UFC champion. However, Rousey's long list of achievements did come after a rough start.

"I didn't really speak coherently until I was six years old," Rousey explains. "I didn't really know I had any problems, I just remember being frustrated all the time that people couldn't understand me."

"My mum says that I would try and repeat myself several times, but whatever I was trying to say would come out as gibberish. I would get so mad that I would just hit people, so it's kind of ironic that now I'm known for speaking my mind a lot, when it used to be that no one could understand a word

out of my mouth. Now people want to hear me talk all the time."

Fighting is in Rousey's blood. Her mother was the first American to win the World Judo Championships and despite some reservations about Ronda joining the fighting game, she was the perfect person to mould her into the champion she would become.

"When I first wanted to do judo, she was resistant of the idea, but as time went on she asked, 'do you really want to do this? Do you want to win the Olympics?' and I said, 'yes I do', so she treated me from the very beginning like she was training an Olympic champion.

"She was extremely hard on me. There were days when I thought that she was terrible and mean and trying to ruin my life, but there is no nice way to turn you into the toughest woman in the world."

Ronda qualified for the Athens Olympics at just 17 years of age, the youngest judo competitor at the Olympics that year. Four years on she

returned to the Olympics a stronger and more determined competitor and walked away with a bronze medal, but quickly realised she had fallen victim to the same problem many Olympic athletes face once their four years of effort are over — what now?

"The day I won was surprisingly happy — I didn't really expect myself to be so happy. I felt like I was in love with everybody in the room, but when I got home it was like I returned to real life. The reality was, I had an Olympic medal but no education and no experience and the only money I made from the Olympic bronze medal was enough to pay for half of a 2005 Honda Accord, so it was kind of a rude awakening."

"I struggled, but I was too stubborn to really ask for help, so I started working three jobs. I was trying to find ways just to get by, but I've been fighting for too long to be easily defeated by any situation."



Rousey eventually found an outlet for her talents when she had her first amateur MMA fight in August of 2010. By January the following year she had decided to turn pro after three straight wins, all by armbar — the longest lasting only 57 seconds.

It wasn't long before Ronda was turning heads everywhere and after some impressive first round stoppages, she joined the Strikeforce roster. Another two more wins by armbar made it seven straight wins (including her three amateur fights) by armbar submission, with no one pushing her beyond the first minute of a fight, let alone the first round.

Her emphatic win over Tate for the Strikeforce Bantamweight title not only confirmed that she was the real deal, it changed the mind of a man who once said women would never fight in his company — UFC president Dana White.

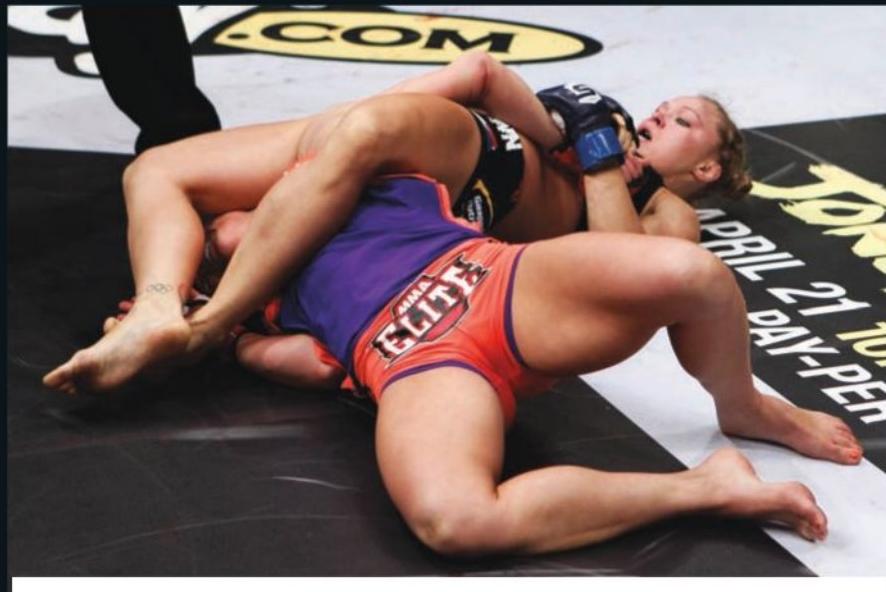
"The way that he told me I was in the UFC, he had me meet him at...I think it was Chow's? Or some fancy rodeo-style restaurant and he said, 'Look the reason I asked you to meet me at this restaurant is because it was right outside of here that I told TMZ that there would never be women in the UFC, and I specifically brought you back here to tell you you're going to be in the UFC.' He's cool like that."

In signing Ronda Rousey, Dana White and the UFC gained a unique woman, who could sell the female brand in a field of male dominance. When she headlined UFC 157 against Liz Carmouche, the estimated pay-per-view numbers were 500,000, which is the highest ever for a female fight. The previous record was only 150,000, when the daughters of Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier stepped into the boxing ring.

At first glance, in a world where Chael Sonnon is the king of trash talk, it's hard to believe this pint-size blonde, with her big smile and laid-back domineer, is the undoubtable queen, until she opens her mouth that is.

"I try and be a much more exaggerated version of myself when doing media. I'm actually pretty calm and quiet at home most of the time, but I know I'm not just an athlete, I'm also an entertainer and it's not my goal to be perfect or universally liked — I just want to be fascinating."

The rivalry between Rousey and Tate was taken up a notch this year when both were named the first ever female coaches of *The Ultimate Fighter* series. Rousey was originally matched against



The last time Rousey and Tate met, it didn't turn out to well for Tate's arm



Cat Zingano, but Zingano suffered a knee injury and had to withdraw from the show. To add some drama to the situation, Rousey was never told about any of this until she walked into the TUF gym for the first day of filming and found Tate standing there. The results will no doubt be entertaining, but Rousey feels the show will see her lose more fans than she gains.

"It definitely wasn't for my own benefit. I'm sure it's actually going to be detrimental to my career, but that's not my only priority despite what many of the other women in the sport think.

"I want the division to really be secure and to have people be aware of the other girls fighting. I did it just so people would get to know the other

girl fighters and get interested in the women's 135-pound division, and just really contribute to the overall stability of it in the UFC. I'm sure there are going to be plenty of people who think a lot less of me when the show comes out."

Needless to say, months of having to see each other day in and day out did not improve the Rousey/Tate relationship. Both have exchanged heated words and with months of build-up still to come before the pair face each other at UFC 168 on 28 December, it's hard to imagine how much more fiery it could get.

Their feud is so interesting that they are even overshadowing some of the much-anticipated male title matches this year. By the time they finally get each

other alone in a cage, they will have spent the better part of six months having to see each other constantly for TUF, spent countless hours in interviews answering questions about each other and talking trash in every press event the UFC hold.

But the current Women's Bantamweight Champion didn't get that title by being complacent, or by letting her emotions get in the way. Despite a well-documented history of tearing arms apart in first rounds, Rousey doesn't get ahead of herself. She visualises a first round stoppage while preparing for a five round brawl.

"I keep a really open mind with my fights. I expect that the very best version of Miesha Tate is going to walk into the cage. I expect that she is going to have a clear head and be the most perfect and efficient fighter she's ever been, and that's what I prepare for.

"Whereas, she sits around and crosses her fingers and hopes that I make a mistake. I expect for her to be at her very most and that's what I train for and prepare for. I expect it to be a five-round war, that's what I'm training for. I always aim for a first-round perfect finish but I'd rather be overprepared than underprepared."

How does it feel being one of the most recognisable women in America, if not the world?

Hell no, I don't believe that at all man, I don't have shit on Angelina Jolie.
[Laughs]

Well, obviously you do get a lot more attention than you did even just a few years ago.

It's different, it definitely is different, but I've never really had that stable of a life. I've always been doing something in some different part of the world. I feel like every single year is almost a different lifestyle and lifetime to the year before. I'm used to things constantly changing. I actually think that if things were normal and the same for a long time, that would feel odder to me.

When did you first notice male fighters respecting your skills and abilities?

It was actually at the first World MMA Awards that I went to, before I had even fought Miesha Tate. I fought Julia Budd and I was vying for the title shot with Miesha. Jon Jones came up to me and was asking me how to do judo

On the Clock

A well-documented streak of first round stoppages means Rousey doesn't spend much time in the cage. From seven pro fights she has managed just 12 minutes and 20 seconds total, a crazy number when compared to the past seven fights of other current UFC champions:

Cain Velasquez – 44 minutes, 31 seconds

Chris Weidman – 68 minutes, 56 seconds

Jon Jones – 92 minutes, 46 seconds

Jose Aldo – 128 minutes, 31 seconds

Dominick Cruz – 138 minutes,

24 seconds

Demetrious Johnson – 143 minutes,

43 seconds

Benson Henderson – 145 minutes

Georges St-Pierre – 170 minutes





throws and asking me about armbars and I was just absolutely shocked that somebody whose career I'd been following for so long, and held in such high regard, was talking to me and asking me advice. I'd never had a single reputable male judo guy ask me how to do anything.

Your mother was a great fighter, is she responsible for your devastating armbar?

Yes. I would definitely attribute my affinity for armbars to her.

You've had to beat guys up in the past, haven't you?

Yeah, you know, it happens.

It doesn't seem like men would intimidate you.

I'm not really intimidated by anything.

You're the UFC's first female champ and you will go down in history as a pioneer for women in the UFC, how does that sit with you?

I really feel like that's only a title you can give yourself in hindsight. I think only if women's MMA survives in the UFC and it is something permanent in the sport and not just a fad, then at that point I'll accept that mantel. You're not a pioneer if you're a flash in the pan.

You're already an inspiration to young women and girls everywhere; does that feel weird considering you're so young yourself?

It's a little concerning because I know I'm not perfect and I have so many cameras around me all the time. I'm being recorded so often I can't constantly be acting like there's eight-year-olds in the room, or else I'm going to go Lohan crazy, it's just not healthy to live like that. So sometimes I know I speak the way I wouldn't if there was a kid in the room and some of them have probably heard it, and sometimes I feel a little bad about it.

What's the thing you would want your fans to remember most then?

What I want my fans to remember is to be ambitious and not necessarily have the same ambitions as me. I want them to be courageous enough to speak their mind and give their opinion and even if they don't have the same opinions as me. I don't want them to be me exactly, but I think there are certain things about me that can be taken as positive. ☺



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BAD GIRLS

The Top 10 Faces of Women's MMA

BY STEVEN MARROCCO

After bursting into the Octagon in February, the UFC women's bantamweight division is showing no signs of cooling off. Anchored by the dominating presence of Ronda Rousey, this year's fight calendar is packed with top-10 match-ups while a fresh crop of talent is set to emerge on the co-ed *The Ultimate Fighter 18*. Couple that with upstart female fight league Invicta FC, which is putting on its sixth show this month, and it's a good time to be a bad girl...in the cage.

Here are 10 female fighters who are bad to the core.



PHOTO BY PAUL THATCHER

Ronda Rousey

Nickname: Rowdy

Division: Bantamweight

Hometown: Venice, California

Record: 7-0

Two years ago, Rousey was a graveyard-shift receptionist at 24-Hour Fitness and a physical therapist to dogs, occasionally overdrafting her checking account on McDonald's coffee. She was suffering from competitive burnout after winning the bronze medal in judo in the 2008 Olympics. In the last year, she's quickly built a resume of gold: UFC Women's Bantamweight Champ, pay-per-view headliner, *The Ultimate Fighter* coach, and cover girl for *ESPN The Magazine: Body Issue*.

Replacing Gina Carano as the face of women's MMA, the undefeated Rousey has turned the armbar into a signature move and become a cash cow for the UFC. A top-five PPV draw after her UFC 157 main event against Liz Carmouche, she next fights Miesha Tate following their stint as coaches on TUF 18.

Cat Zingano

Nickname: Alpha

Division: Bantamweight

Hometown: Broomfield, Colorado

Record: 8-0

A regional champ at 125-135 pounds, undefeated Cat Zingano was scheduled to make her big-show debut last year at Strikeforce: Melendez vs. Healy, but the event was cancelled. Zuffa, however, kept her contract handy. Six months later, she awoke to a missed call from a Las Vegas-area number. It was UFC president Dana White, who told her she would win a title shot and coaching position opposite Rousey if she beat Miesha Tate at the TUF 17 Finale.

Although lesser known than her ex-champion counterpart, Zingano grabbed the spotlight in April by smashing Tate with a flurry of knees in the second-ever women's UFC bout. Unfortunately, a knee injury forced her to withdraw from TUF 18 and her title shot, but she is expected to face the winner of Rousey vs. Tate sometime next year.



PHOTO BY APRIL PISHNA / RING OF FIRE

Miesha Tate

Nickname: Cupcake

Division: Bantamweight

Hometown: Yakima, Washington

Record: 13-4

Miesha Tate wrestled on the boys' team in high school and joined an MMA club in college. She became a fixture of the bantamweight class in Strikeforce, where she posted a 4-1 record before submitting Marloes Coenen to win the promotion's title.

Her rivalry with Ronda Rousey helped push women's MMA back to headliner status in March 2012 but, unfortunately, the star-making opportunity would again go to her opponent, as Rousey brutally dislocated her elbow with an armbar. Zingano's injury now gives her another chance at redemption, and she's set to rematch Rousey in late December after coaching TUF 18.



PHOTO BY ESTHER LIN / SHOWTIME / STRIKEFORCE



Marloes Coenen

Nickname: Rumina

Division: Featherweight

Hometown: Amsterdam, Netherlands

Record: 21-5

One of the most experienced female fighters in active competition, Coenen came to national prominence in Strikeforce, where she faltered against the ferocious Cristiane 'Cyborg' Justino but came back to armbar Sarah Kaufman to win the Strikeforce Women's Bantamweight Title.

Coenen, who began training martial arts to guard against attackers during a daily bike ride through a forest in her hometown, had a short title reign, submitting future UFC contender Liz Carmouche but tapping out to Miesha Tate. One of four casualties in a business dispute between her MMA team Golden Glory and Zuffa, Coenen was cut from Strikeforce, but she found a home with Invicta FC, where she'll get a chance at revenge against Cyborg this month.

PHOTO BY ESTHER LIN / SHOWTIME / STRIKEFORCE

Cristiane Justino

Nickname: Cyborg

Division: Featherweight

Hometown: Curitiba, Brazil

Record: 11-1

Discovered playing handball by legendary Chute Boxe trainer Rudimar Fedrigo, Christiane Justino was as fierce in the gym as she was on the court. Making her big-show debut in the defunct EliteXC, 'Cyborg', who took her nickname from her now-ex-husband Evangelista Santos, quickly made it clear that opponents couldn't hang with her relentless output of violence. With a flurry of fists, knees and ground-and-pound, she obliterated the scant competition in the featherweight division, including the face of women's MMA, Gina Carano.

After a positive test for steroids that led to her ouster from Strikeforce, Santos spent almost two years on the bench during which she developed a heated rivalry with Rousey that stoked the fire of a potential blockbuster PPV. It wasn't to be, as Justino passed on a new UFC contract in favour of a deal with Invicta FC. Cyborg will rematch Marloes Coenen in July, but many believe a showdown with Rousey is inevitable.



PHOTO BY ESTHER LIN / SHOWTIME / STRIKEFORCE

Sarah Kaufman

Division: Bantamweight

Hometown: Victoria,
British Columbia, Canada

Record: 16-2

Trading ballet slippers for MMA gloves as a teen, Kaufman proved to be as nimble inside the cage as on the dance floor, mowing down four straight top-tier opponents in Strikeforce – one by epic KO slam – and winning the Strikeforce Women's Bantamweight Title. She lost the belt to Coenen and became victim No. 9 of Rousey's armbar, but she was one of the first signed to the UFC when the promotion opened up to women.

Kaufman, who has been working closely with Greg Jackson in recent years, now awaits her Octagon debut.

PHOTO BY ESTHER LIN



PHOTO BY JOSH MILLER

Sara McMann

Division: Bantamweight

Hometown: Gaffney, South Carolina

Record: 7-0

A standout wrestler in high school, Sara McMann medalled in three World Championships before winning a spot in the 2004 Olympics, where she became the first American women to win silver as a freestyle competitor.

After a failed bid for the 2008 Olympic team, she switched to MMA in 2011 and won four fights that year. After a brief stint in Invicta, McMann was signed by the UFC and made her debut at UFC 159, where she earned a first-round TKO over Sheila Gaff. With her stellar mat credentials and improving striking game, she's consistently mentioned as a future contender to Rousey's crown.

Alexis Davis

Nickname: Ally-Gator

Division: Bantamweight

Hometown: Port Colborne, Ontario, Canada

Record: 14-5

If you want to watch a display of grit and heart, pull up Davis' fight against Sarah Kaufman at Strikeforce: Tate vs. Rousey. A non-stop flurry of fists, she took everything Kaufman doled out and kept coming forward, blood and all. She lost the fight, but impressed UFC matchmakers after a pair of wins in Invicta. In her UFC debut, Davis defeated Rosi Sexton via unanimous decision.

A Black-belt in jiu jitsu, her nimbleness on the mat and raw heart make her a tough challenge for anyone in the bantamweight class.



PHOTO BY ESTHER LIN



PHOTO BY ESTHER LIN / SHOWTIME / STRIKEFORCE

Liz Carmouche

Nickname: Girl-Rilla

Division: Bantamweight

Hometown: San Diego, California

Record: 8-3

Carmouche put fans on the edge of their seats at UFC 157 when she took Ronda Rousey's back and cranked the champ's face so hard she left the fight with bite marks on her forearm. Of course, her surge would be short-lived, as Rousey bucked and found her trademark armbar. But the impression she left wasn't lost on the UFC.

Carmouche, who's set to fight newcomer Jessica Andrade at UFC on FOX 8 on July 27, made headlines as a former Marine and openly gay fighter. But at 29 years old, her compelling backstory only complements what's been a quick rise in the 135-pound division. So far, only champs and former champs have trumped her ground-and-pound skills.

Michelle Waterson

Nickname: Karate Hottie

Division: Atomweight

Hometown: Albuquerque, New Mexico

Record: 11-3

The former Hooters girl, bikini model, and wushu practitioner got her intro to MMA through UFC lightweight Donald Cerrone before eventually becoming a regular at Jackson-Winkeljohn's MMA. After some initial struggles in her MMA transition, the 27-year-old earned her biggest win to date when she bested Jessica Penne to win the Invicta FC Atomweight Championship.

Although the 105-pound champ's division is probably furthest from inclusion in the UFC's ranks, Waterson could be a breakout star if Invicta is able to secure a TV deal this year.

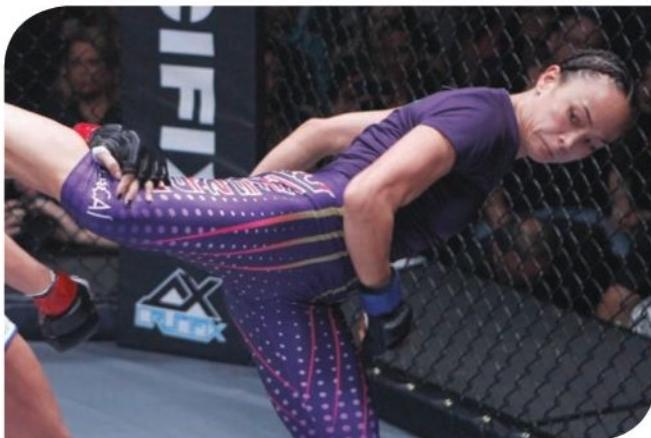


PHOTO BY ESTHER LIN / INVICTA FC

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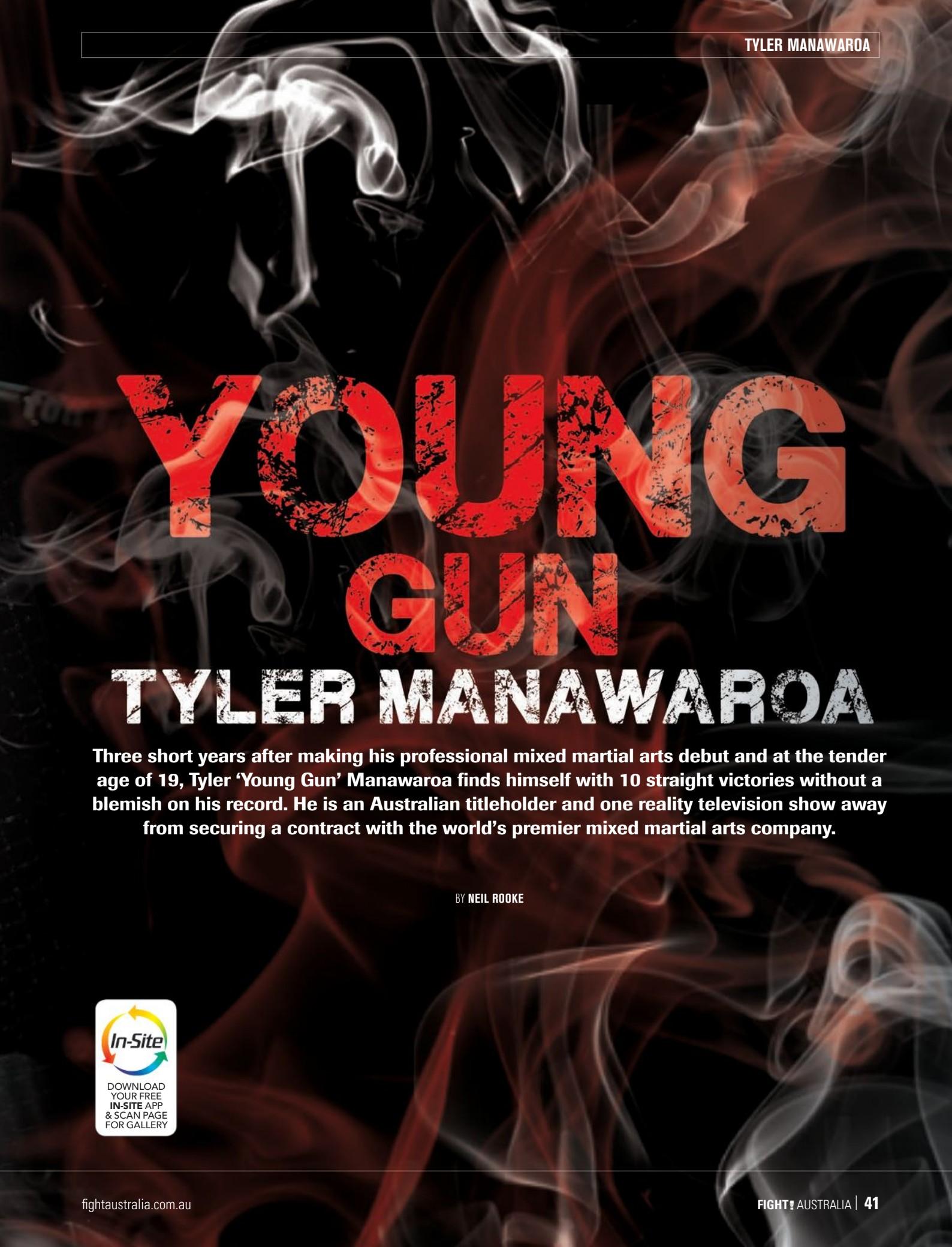
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TYLER MANAWAROA





YOUNG GUN

TYLER MANAWAROA

Three short years after making his professional mixed martial arts debut and at the tender age of 19, Tyler 'Young Gun' Manawaroa finds himself with 10 straight victories without a blemish on his record. He is an Australian titleholder and one reality television show away from securing a contract with the world's premier mixed martial arts company.

BY NEIL ROOKE



When you think of a 16-year-old taking part in a fight, the first thought that would come to mind is that it was going to be some kind of a schoolyard stoush. It's something that almost every teenage boy will go through and unless it's a serious case of bullying, it's mostly considered as a normal part of growing up.

Manawaroa wasn't quite fighting in the schoolyard when he was 16, instead he was making his mixed martial arts debut. It only took one win for him to work out that the sport was something that he could continue to excel in and from there, as it is often said, the rest is history.

"I was 16 and just about to turn 17 when I made my debut as a fighter. As soon as I had the fight I knew that it was what I wanted to do. I loved it," Manawaroa says. "Going into the first one I was pretty nervous, but after it I got pretty excited and it changed my life forever. I stopped playing rugby altogether and then focused on just training and fighting. These days I train five days a week, three times a day. I plan to pretty much keep focused on fighting but I'm also a personal trainer, so that along with my fight career keeps me pretty busy."

At the beginning of 2013, Manawaroa made the move from fighting in the welterweight division to fighting at middleweight and has since posted two wins in a row in the division he has been calling his new home. With 10 wins under his belt and with no defeats to his name, self-assurance is one thing that the young fighter does not lack leading into the try-outs for Australia's upcoming season of the UFC's top rated reality series, *The Ultimate Fighter*.

"I'm pretty confident going into the try-outs and hopefully I can get selected to compete in the show," he says. "We are looking at trying out at 77kg [the welterweight division weight limit]. My manager, Tony Green, thinks that it's the best weight for me and we think that I will have a better chance at getting in at welterweight. With my coaches we are going to be working on a diet plan so that I can get to the right weight and still feel good at the time of a fight."

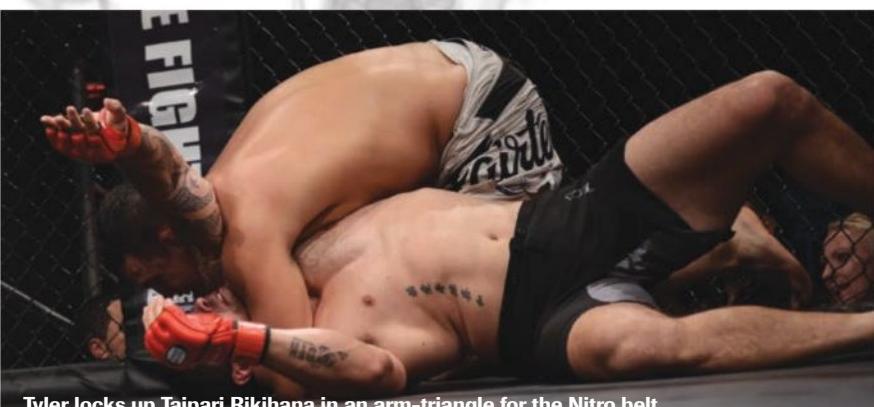
With another big win leading him to secure his first major Australian title on July 13 at Nitro 9, Manawaroa has some big shoes to fill. The former Nitro

Tyler vs NZ's Eugene Bareman last year at Warriors Realm in Gladstone



BRENDA STRONG

EVERY SINGLE ONE OF MY FIGHTS EXCEPT FOR ONE HAS BEEN FINISHED AND THAT'S ANOTHER THING THAT I REALLY LOVE TO HAVE TO MY NAME. I AM REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO THE OPPORTUNITY TO REPRESENT AUSTRALIA IF IT IS GIVEN TO ME.



Tyler locks up Taipari Rikihana in an arm-triangle for the Nitro belt

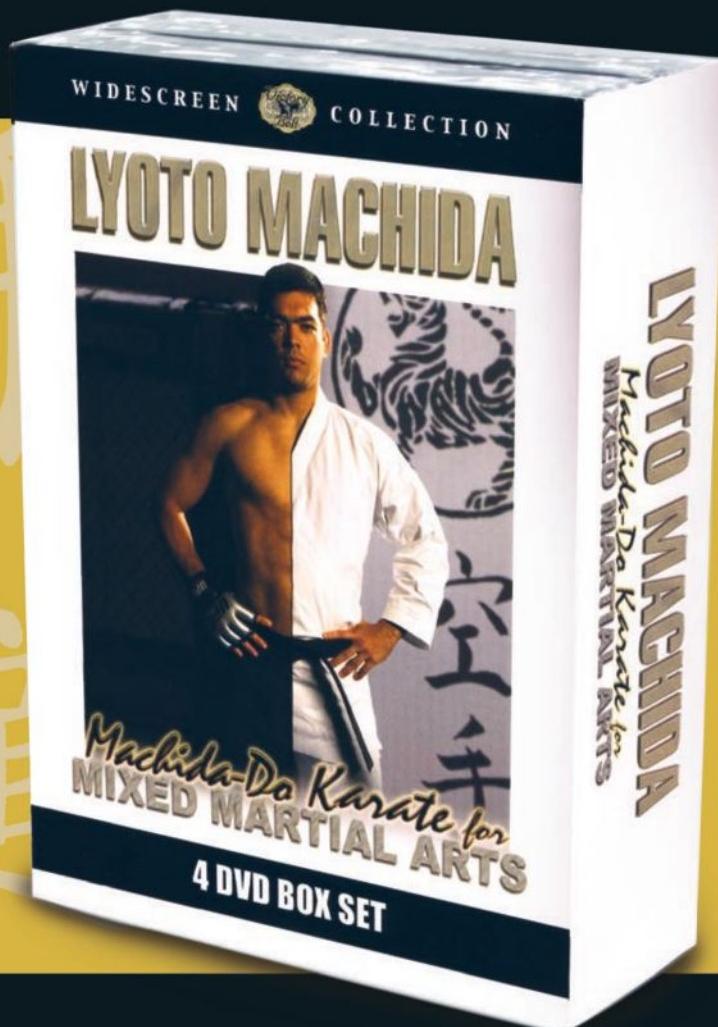
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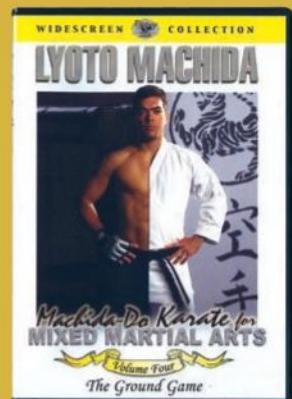
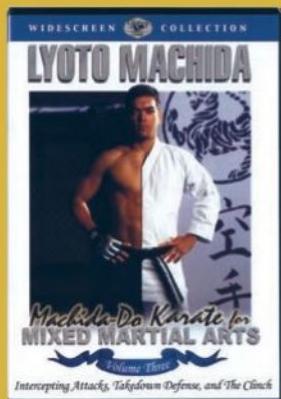
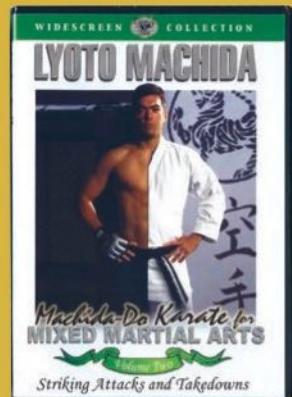
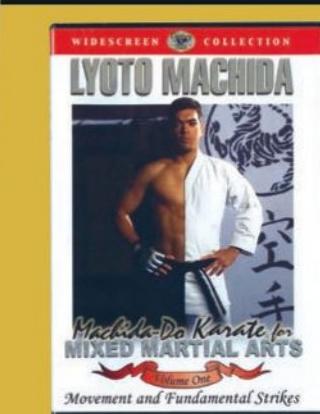
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MMA middleweight champion was Dylan 'The Villain' Andrews, whose very next professional fight after winning the same championship was on the finale of his season of *The Ultimate Fighter* where he, in highlight reel fashion, was able to secure the first official win of his UFC career.

"I'd love that to happen for me too," Manawaroa says. "I think I have what it takes to make it to the show. Having a record like mine isn't something that too many fighters in Australia have and I am happy about that. Every single one of my fights except for one has been finished and that's another thing that I really love to have to my name. I am really looking forward to the opportunity to represent Australia if it is given to me."

Training out of Australia's elite mixed martial arts gym, Integrated MMA, has meant that Manawaroa has the chance to surround himself with some of the best coaches and training partners that Australia has to offer. Being a part of what is arguably Australia's most successful fight team has also given him the opportunity to train with the incumbent Team Australia coach; Kyle 'KO' Noke, who during his time in Australia

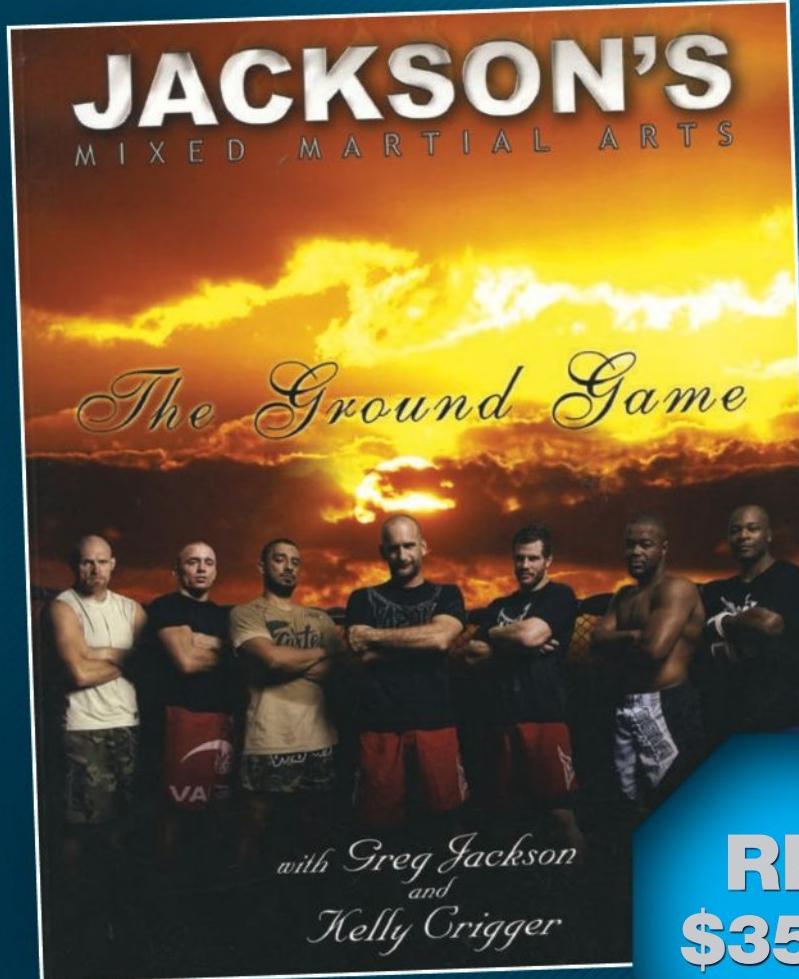


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Greg Jackson was raised in a neighborhood where he had to fight to survive. He tried every martial art he could get his hands on, only to find they all lacked practicality. He developed his own system instead, and is now the most accomplished and celebrated mixed martial arts coach in the world. In Jackson's Mixed Martial Arts, he brings you into his stable of fighters, which includes UFC welterweight champion Georges St Pierre, former UFC light heavyweight champion Rashad Evans, and top ranked contenders Nate Marquardt, Keith Jardine, Donald "Cowboy" Cerrone and Joey Villasenor. For the first time he unveils his methods of ground fighting that have enabled his fighters to dominate every MMA promotion and every grappling competition in the U.S. Every ground fighting situation is addressed from ground and pound to passing the guard, along with loads of submissions

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can be found training in his old stomping ground Integrated MMA.

"He's awesome," Manawaroa says. "I've trained with him a few times before and it'd be a good opportunity if I could do it again. He trains out of a top gym in America so anything he can teach us will be great. He's so good to talk to when he comes over here and he's always got some pretty funny stories about over there [in America]."

A big part of young adulthood is travelling. A lot of school leavers will find themselves taking a year off to explore the world before beginning the first day of the rest of their lives. Manawaroa hasn't travelled too much (if at all) and an opportunity to be signed by the UFC would certainly open that chapter of his life right up.

"I've only really been over to New Zealand," he says. "So, if I get the chance, I am definitely looking forward to being able to travel a bit. Especially getting over to Canada for the show, that's something I'd really like to do."

Having an Australian title to his name and being on the brink of potential stardom, Manawaroa still manages to keep a level head in his day-to-day life and he attributes that to his friends and also the people around him who make up his support network.

"All my friends just treat me the same, so it's not that much different for me," Manawaroa says. "There are a lot of people who want to see me do well. The support I also get from sponsors like Australian Sports Nutrition, All Type Cabinets, Tapout and Fairtex is pretty awesome and they make me able to continue to focus on training full time and getting better as a fighter."

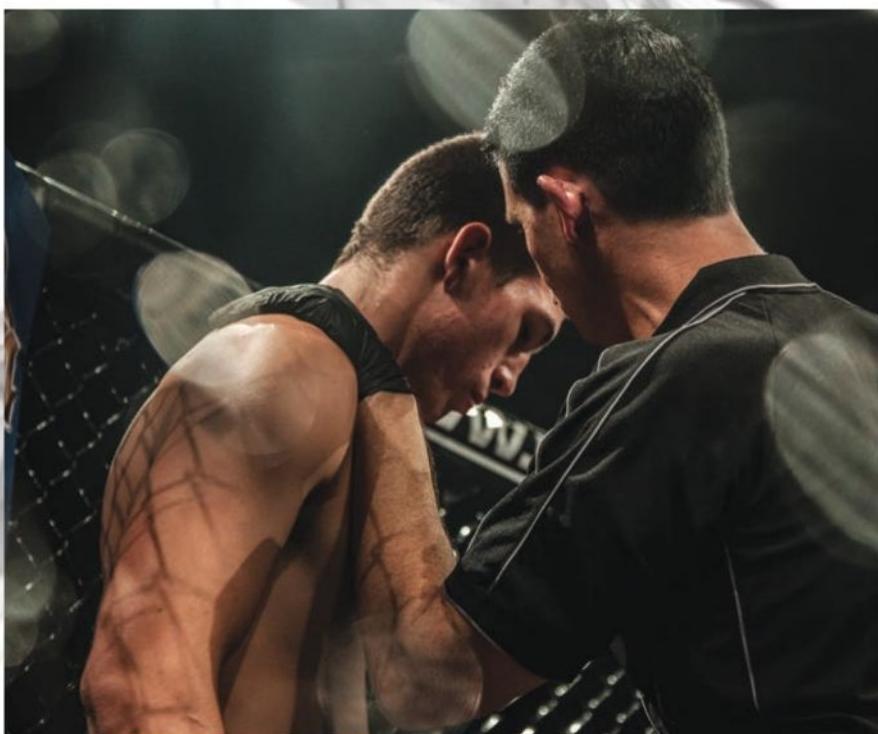
"I am really happy for the support that I get from my gym, Integrated MMA, my manager Tony Green and my coaches Dan Higgins and Rob Giuffrida. I wouldn't be where I am today if it wasn't for them and that's something that I remember every day."

At the end of the day, age is just a number and that adage was witnessed firsthand when Kelvin Gastelum upset series favourite, Uriah Hall in season 17 of *The Ultimate Fighter*. It's something that Manawaroa keeps at the front of his mind, and it is something that he wants to replicate if he is given the chance to take part in the upcoming series.

"It'd be pretty cool if that was me this time around," Manawaroa says. "I'm not too worried about it [his age] though, all of the guys I train with are older so I am



BRENDA STRONG



PENGHUYNH PHOTOGRAPHY

used to it. Going in there as the young guy isn't going to be any different for me and I am ready for anything that is thrown at me."

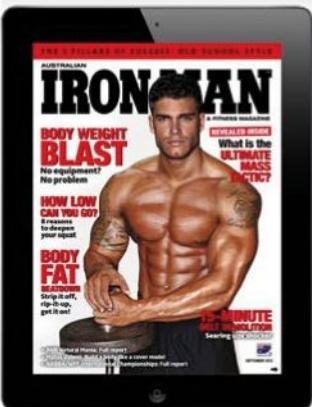
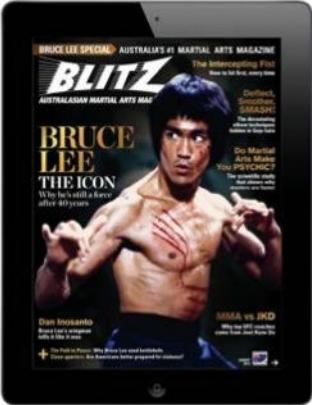
It took just one fight for Manawaroa to fall in love with the sport of mixed martial arts. A few more wins strung together after that has meant that he now has the base of what makes up a successful career. At the age of 16, most teenagers are still trying to work out what they are going to do with themselves after they finish their day at school, let alone what

they plan to do for the rest of their life. For Manawaroa, the decision was an easy one to make when his hand was raised in a familiar fashion with a victory time and time again.

He may be going into the try-outs of *The Ultimate Fighter: Nations* as the 'Young Gun', but for Manawaroa, the simple fact is that he is still yet to reach his prime as a professional fighter. With so many years ahead of him and with 10 wins from 10 professional bouts, there really is no doubt that for him, the best is still yet to come.

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THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE

Is ONE FC the new PRIDE?

BY JASON CHAMBERS // PHOTOS BY ONE FC

ONE FC is the largest MMA organisation in Asia and often draws comparisons to the much beloved PRIDE events — but what is ONE FC really?

Launched just two years ago on 14 July, 2011, ONE Fighting Championship is now the most widely recognised MMA promotion in Asia and is gaining global steam. Holding sold-out events in Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Jakarta and Singapore, ONE FC has expanded rapidly in popularity and has even landed a 10-year contract with ESPN/Star Sports to broadcast their events.

Now, I am as cynical as the rest of the MMA community when it comes to a new organisation being hailed as 'The Next Big Thing'. The canyon of MMA organisation doom is wide, deep and filled with millions of dollars in wasted funds, broken promises and unrealised hype. We have seen the mighty fall. Is ONE FC really any different?

In my humble opinion, yes — and for a few key reasons.



1) THE RULES FOR ONE FC CREATE A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT PRODUCT

ONE FC has augmented the standard MMA Global Rule Set by utilising both the PRIDE and Nevada Rules that allow for soccer kicks as well as permitting the use of stomp kicks to the body and legs, and the use of elbows. The knees can be used at any time during the fight, but stomp kicks can never be used against the head.

PRIDE rules can be utilised at any point during the fight — a recent change made to ONE FC rules, which used to call for the referee to signal ‘Open Attack’ before PRIDE rules would apply. The confusion in the application of PRIDE rules led to some controversy during the early ONE FC events, an issue that has now been rectified.

2) THE PEOPLE INVOLVED ARE TREMENDOUSLY KNOWLEDGEABLE

Victor Cui, the CEO and owner of ONE FC, was also the man behind Martial

Combat — another ESPN Star Sports fight promotion. In 2010, Martial Combat delivered 12 events on ESPN Star Sports in what was described as a “small pilot test project” for what would become ONE FC, after effectively working out some of the kinks.

Another man at the ONE FC helm is MMA pioneer Matt Hume. Hume is the executive VP of ONE FC and has been a catalyst in the brands success thus far.

3) THE BUSINESS MODEL IS UNIQUE

ONE FC has taken a vastly different approach in building their organisation — a factor that is key to their unparalleled success in short order. They are embracing the power of leverage and forging strong relationships with gyms, organisations and sponsors. By creating summits and other efficient meetings of the minds, they have developed great synergies that have enabled them to grow their brand rapidly throughout Asia.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The next ONE Fighting Championship event is scheduled for 13 September, 2013, in Jakarta and features archrivals Yasuhiro Urushitani against Shinichi Kojima in a flyweight world title fight. The rivalry between the two Japanese men is well known, as they fought each other twice previously — both times ending in a draw — when they were part of the Shooto organisation.

Given the previous success of ONE Fighting Championship events, the leadership of Victor Cui, and a significant 10-year contract with ESPN Star Sports, there is little doubt that the ONE FC will continue to enjoy success and growth in Asia, and perhaps even start reaching into competitive markets to expand their unique brand of fighting.

Is ONE FC the next PRIDE? No. There will never be another PRIDE. But taking lessons learned from their downfall and maintaining the current course may enable them to be more than PRIDE ever was. Time will tell.

Shinya Aoki applies the pressure to Kotetsu Boku on his way to a second-round victory via rear naked choke at ONE Fighting Championships in Singapore on 5 April, 2013. Since losing to Gilbert Melendez in 2010, Aoki has won 10 of his last 11 fights.

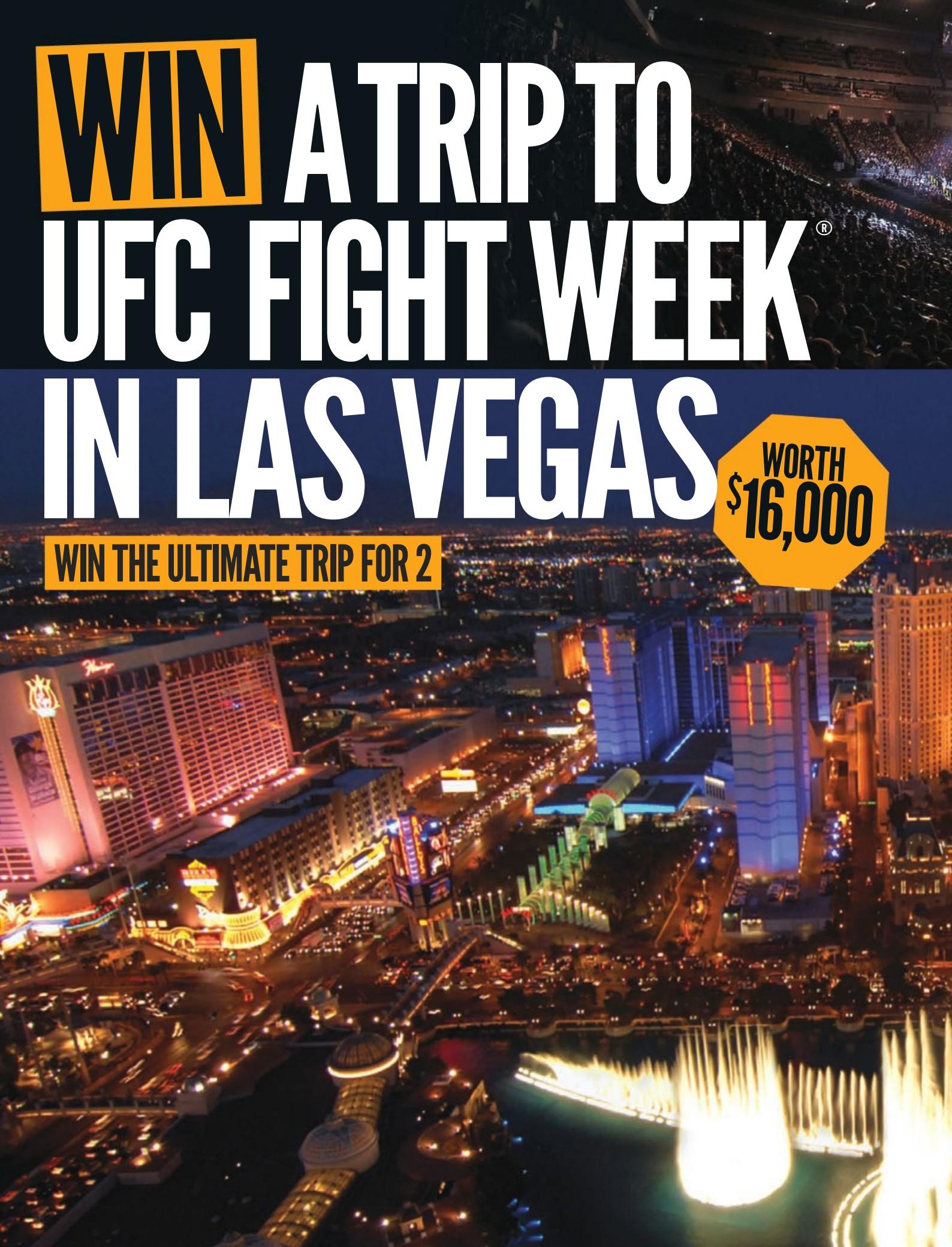


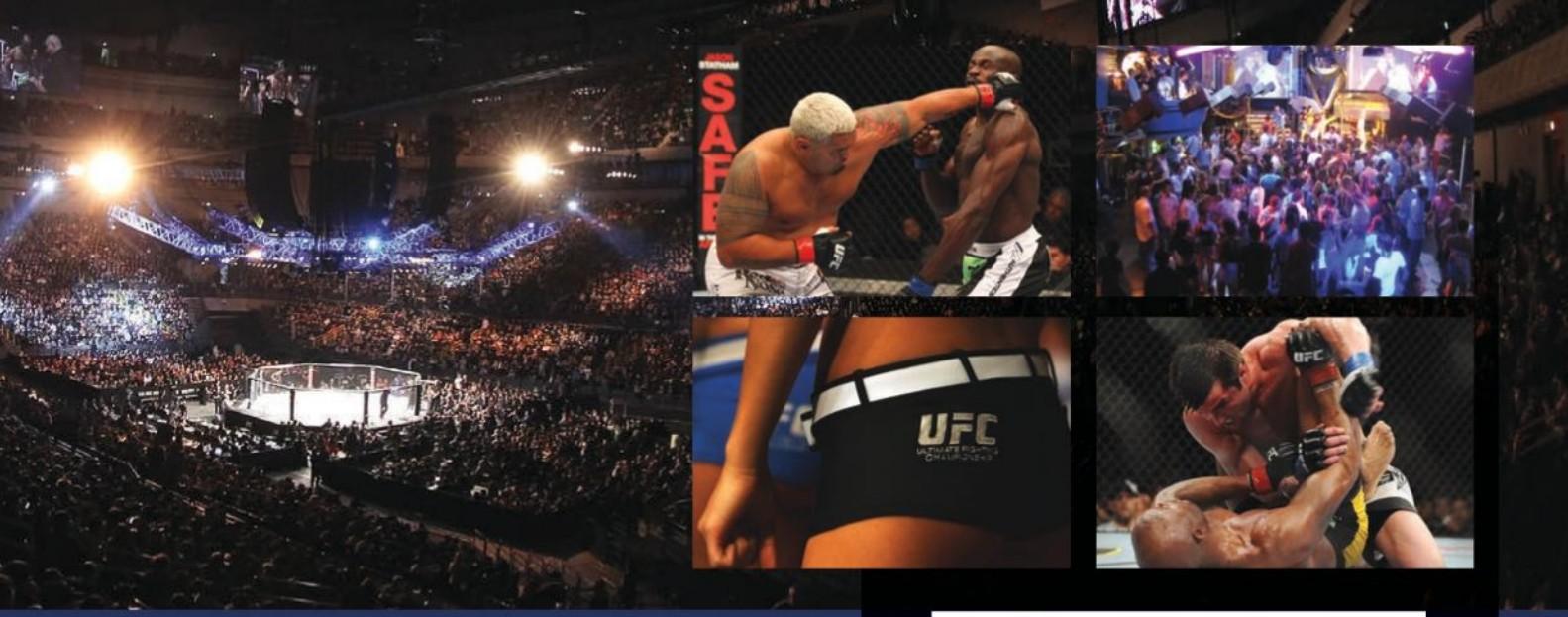
➤ The next ONE Fighting Championship event is scheduled for 13 September, 2013, in Jakarta, Indonesia. For more information visit onefc.com

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EVE OF DESTRUCTION

The night before Chris Weidman beat Anderson Silva for the UFC Middleweight Title, Ray Longo saw things unfolding before his eyes.

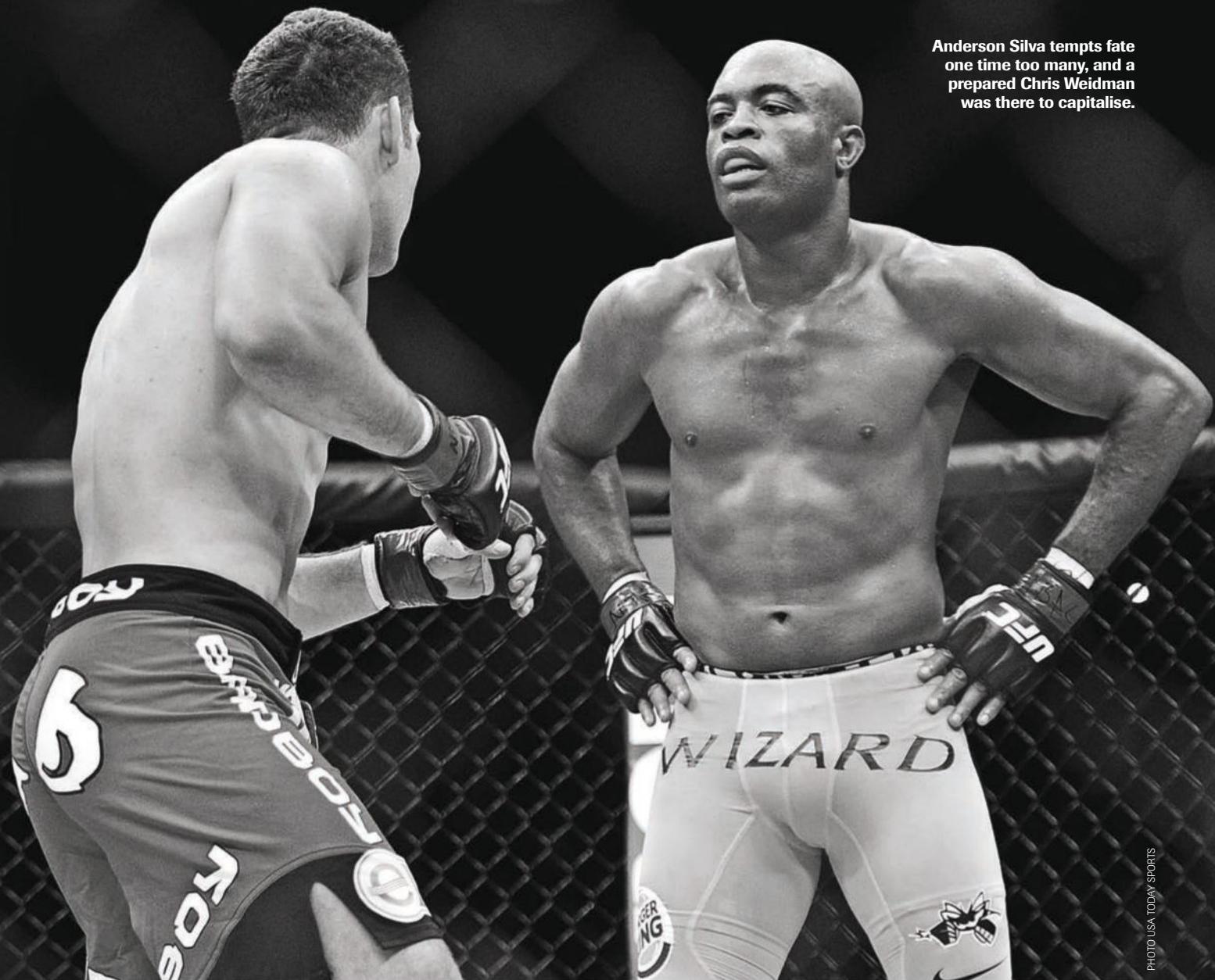
BY CHUCK MINDENHALL // PHOTO BY PAUL THATCHER

Heavyweight great Floyd Patterson wouldn't have sex during his training camps before fights because he believed it weakened the knees. This is a proud fight-game deprivation that has been passed down through the centuries. It's more scientific than a rabbit's foot, but 'Jersey' Joe Walcott still carried around a miniature horseshoe just in case. Fighters always have been superstitious. Englishman Charlie Mitchell, it is said, avoided cross-eyed women before a bout. Phobias like that are a dime a dozen.

Yet, New York's Jake LaMotta had no use for charms and no fear of crook-eyed women. Back in the day, he even laughed at Patterson's forced celibacy on a televised roundtable with him. To a no-nonsense New Yorker, a fight hinges on getting in there and fighting. That's it. And that's the sort of cloth that Long Island's Chris Weidman is cut from.

CHRIS WEIDMAN





Anderson Silva tempts fate one time too many, and a prepared Chris Weidman was there to capitalise.

PHOTO USA TODAY SPORTS

On the eve of his historic fight with the UFC Middleweight Champion Anderson Silva, Weidman was in bed. He had read some inspirational texts and was sleeping away the last Friday night before his life would change. For weeks leading up, he insisted the pressure that comes with fighting for the belt wouldn't bog him down. He wouldn't disappear in the moment, he said, wouldn't let doubt creep in. He told *FIGHT!* two months prior in New York, "I have a refuse-to-lose attitude." That sort of projection seemed admirable from a distance, but also increasingly unrealistic as the thing drew near. Even for a guy with a degree in psychology, as

Weidman has, it's hard to stay ravelled when the boogeyman of the division looms ahead — when posters of Silva and yourself are everywhere you look in Las Vegas. The immensity of that moment can do things to a man.

But by Friday night, he'd been hit with the worst of it already. He'd gotten through the weigh-ins and all the boom mics and recorders and the bombardment of familiar questions. He dealt with the doubts — all of them transferrable from the tone of the questions — and absorbed the 'dead man walking' looks. He'd strolled by Silva and his monstrous entourage many times, coolly ignoring the archipelago of yellow and black shirts

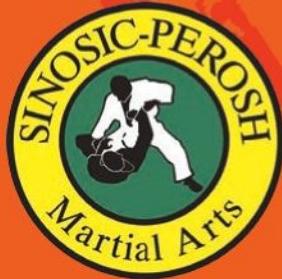
that moved through the throngs at the MGM to wild chants.

Even when he and Silva went lips-to-lips in the weigh-in stare-down, he smiled and joked about the unexpected softness of the champ's sweet kiss. He had been a good sport.

Now, he was fast asleep in a town that doesn't sleep, with only one thing left to do — get up tomorrow and take out the number one pound-for-pound fighter on the planet.

His trainer, Ray Longo, wasn't sleeping, because it's left to the closest people in a fighter's camp to do the worrying. He came downstairs for a quick drink at the Rouge Bar in the MGM Grand, a little Grey Goose and

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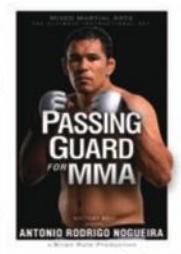
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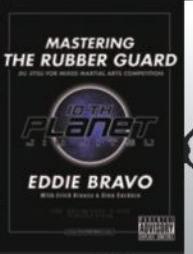
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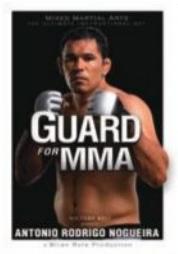
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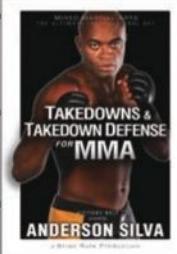


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grapefruit. He'd been with Weidman throughout the night...throughout the cut...throughout the week... throughout his entire run through the UFC...all the way back to when the young Hofstra wrestler was dragged into Longo's by a friend who insisted Longo check him out.

"He's homegrown," Longo says. "He grew up with me."

Now, here he was — here they were — on the cusp of greatness.

Again.

First, there was Matt Serra in Houston at UFC 69, knocking off Georges St-Pierre in what's still considered the greatest upset in UFC history. Serra was a local boy from Longo's, just like Weidman. Nobody thought Serra would beat St-Pierre, other than Longo and Serra. With Weidman, it was different. People were split. Some believed he had the tools to take out the UFC's longest running champion, but others were convinced he'd get his ass handed to him. Silva was 16-0 in the UFC, after all, and "has a highlight reel as long as Long Island", as Longo says. Weidman was

green and hadn't fought in more than a year. Even Longo had to consider both sides. "There's a chance we go in there and he makes us look stupid," he said. "We won't know until we're in there with him."

"Do you like this feeling, the night before a title fight like this?" I ask him.

"I do love this feeling," he says. "He's ready. I really think he is. He's so strong. I want to say, if he gets a hold of Anderson's neck, it's over, man. This kid is so strong."

"What did you see on the tapes of the other guys fighting Anderson?"

"That they aren't Chris," he says. "Weidman's not those guys — that's the difference. He's really not those guys."

"What happens when Silva drops his hands and does that thing that Silva does, where he switches modes and goes berserker?"

"When he does that, he leaves his hips open and his body open, and I've told Chris to punch a hole in his chest," Longo says. "That's another way of saying, start at the body, finish at the head. I think Anderson doesn't realise

just how long this guy's reach is. He did that to Forrest, and Forrest just couldn't hit him." Here he looks up with those glassy blue eyes. "This kid — this kid will put a tracking device on his head and he'll catch him."

Of course, days later, Longo admits he was a nervous wreck at the bar, and the rest of the night. And he's nervous because he feels accountable for Weidman. Here's a kid being scrutinised by every pundit and casual fan in the country. There's a whole fan expo built around the event he is headlining.

But Longo knows what he knows, about Weidman's strength, his stand-up ability, his wrestling, his grappling, his poise and his desire. He knows he won't break mentally. But knowing and hoping are interchangeable the night before the event. The possibilities are of all kinds, not just those you feel good contemplating. There's a very real possibility that this moment is the closest Chris Weidman will ever get to the sun.

"I just really want to see this kid do good," Longo says. "Not for me, but

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Striking coach Ray Longo, Chris Weidman, Charlie Weidman, and JiuJitsu savant Jon Danaher celebrate the results of months of hard work and preparation.

PHOTO USA TODAY SPORTS



for him. If anything goes wrong, I'll definitely take it personal. I know we put the work in and everything, but it's MMA, and anything can happen. I really just want to see the best for him."

The anticipation of the fight overrides everything. Longo talks about "the kiss", and chuckles, and about how behind the curtain before coming out to weigh-in, Silva walked up behind Weidman right to the back of his head and stood there as if to intimidate. "I thought, what is this, kindergarten?" he laughs. "Just playing head games." With all the things going on, with Brazilian and American fans everywhere, and the UFC handing out towels of those countries to fans in attendance, Longo finishes his drink and says, "It really has a feel of Us against Them."

On fight night, Longo will show up with his father's ID bracelet from the Navy, just like he always does. "I'm a whack job," he says. "I have some superstitions. Nothing that will make me stop what I'm going to do, but things that make me feel better."

And somewhere, Silva had a couple of Big Macs (or maybe Whoppers now that he's sponsored by Burger King). That has long been his ritual before a fight. Everybody has their thing.

Twenty-four hours later, Weidman is the UFC Middleweight Champion. It's one of the most memorable knockouts in UFC history, and for a variety of reasons.

Silva dropped his hands and tried the old Venus flytrap technique, where he invites his prey in, like he has so many times, mocking Weidman the whole way. Just as Longo said, Weidman was ready for it. He took the invitation seriously and got in on Silva to land a fateful left hook. "The reason Weidman stood up is because he knew that I believed he could beat him standing," Longo says two days later in Long Island. "I've watched the kid spar so many times against quality guys and we never had a problem. If Silva had started mugging too much, the idea was to back out, to disengage, and to re-stalk him again."

Didn't need to. Silva clowned, and Weidman connected. In the second round of a fight that Weidman begged for and Silva only relented to take, he knocked out the greatest mixed martial artist we've known to date. For the second time in his life, Longo has helped a homegrown Long Island boy become a UFC Champion. And for the second time, he'll now prepare that guy for a rematch with the man whose belt they took.

"Honestly, I feel like these are two totally separate entities when it comes to the rematch," he says. "I guarantee you the second time around Weidman's going to beat him worse than the first time. Matt really went into that second fight with two herniated discs. Matt's a company man. He was going to take

that fight if they wheeled him in on a wheelchair. He had cancelled on Hughes, there was no way he was going to cancel on GSP."

Longo is hesitant to say too much about the Serra/St-Pierre fights because, these days, they're all friends. But facts are facts, and Longo has some history on the right side of the facts. Serra shocked the world but didn't win the rematch. Weidman smashed the game's greatest and now awaits Silva's return.

"With the antics, as far as that goes, it's funny," Longo says. "People are fickle. When he did it with Forrest, it was okay. When he did it with Bonnar, it was okay. All of a sudden, it's not okay. Honestly, that's the way the guy fights! And he paid the ultimate price for it. Weidman's not those guys — that's the difference. He's really not those guys. Silva's not going to get away with that crap, and that's what happened. And, another thing, you give him confidence like that, I'm going to say there's no stopping Weidman in a rematch. That's all from knowing him versus a fan speculating from the outside. That's just how he is. Once he gets it into his head that he can beat you — I don't care if it's golf, tennis, MMA, basketball, Tiddly Winks, croquet — I'm telling you, this guy's going to be a problem."

It was one hell of an exchange. Silva handed Weidman the belt, and in return, Weidman handed Silva the problem. ☺

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THE 2013 POWER 20

It's time for the annual FIGHT! Magazine Power 20, where we rank the top movers, shakers, and moneymakers in the MMA world. These 20 people make real things happen — running organisations, booking fights, closing large deals, opening new markets, increasing the MMA foothold and putting asses in seats on fight night. When members of the Power 20 act, they affect the MMA space-time continuum — you just have to think four-dimensionally.

From fighters and MMA personalities to entrepreneurs and executives, the Power 20 is a combination of all that MMA represents. When our panel of experts voted, these were the 20 people who moved the MMA compass.

20 SHANNON KNAPP **Invicta FC president**

It's difficult to imagine the upsurge in women's MMA in 2013 without factoring in the contributions of Knapp, the Invicta FC president who put the girls on the map. A one-time executive with the UFC and Strikeforce, Knapp and Janet Martin created Invicta in 2012 to give female fighters their own spotlight. How instrumental was she? With the likes of Sara McMann, Liz Carmouche, Cat Zingano and many others using the Invicta platform, it's become a pipeline to the UFC — and the UFC, not all that long ago, didn't feel there was enough talent to bring the women over. What a difference a year makes. Credit Knapp for deepening the ranks.

19 SAM CAPLAN **Bellator matchmaking**

It's true that matchmaking in

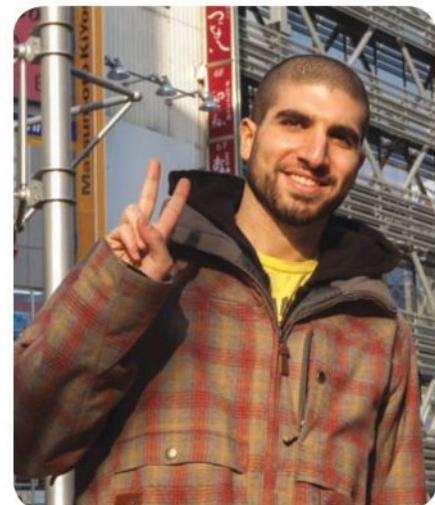
a bracket-style tournament can look like mindless work, but consistently finding top global talent in what is a competitive marketplace speaks volumes for Caplan's eye. From Douglas Lima to Andrey Koreshkov to Bubba Jenkins, Caplan is a class master in searching out every mat, ring, cage or coffee shop for the next BIG thing. Now, with Viacom behind him, MMA diehards may want to become fluent in Russian to keep up with the superstars he dredges up.

18 BRUCE BUFFER **UFC ring announcer**

As if his James Bond double life wasn't enough, the legendary 'Voice of the Octagon' put out a tell-all book that recounts the time he beat the hatches off of Frank Trigg in an elevator. Hyperbole? Hey, nobody has done more with hyperbole than the sharp-dressed Buffer, who has trademarked his "It's Time!" signature call into a small fortune. When not writing, Buffer plays poker professionally, surfs in Malibu, traverses the globe for UFC cards and/or speaking engagements, and — when



it's time to play — he can be found with a model on each arm (note: it's always time to play). This man may be MMA's modern Lothario, but, my God, what a deft hand he has with those name cards.



17 ARIEL HELWANI **Fancy-shoe reporter guy**

The Fuel TV broadcaster created his own mini MMA media empire, boasting the popular *MMA Hour*, *UFC Tonight*, 170,000 Twitter followers and the largest library of fighter interviews in the sport. His access is unprecedented, as he regularly unearths scoops from UFC president Dana White. Thousands of MMA fans turn to him for their MMA news, meaning his influence is massive. He's the hardest working man since James Brown, which is crucial, since he has a colourful shoe habit that can't be quenched. It has to get expensive.

16 CAIN VELASQUEZ

UFC Heavyweight Champion

Velasquez is already closing in on becoming the UFC's greatest heavyweight champion of all time, which, in itself, is worthy of plaudits. He's a star in America because of it. But when you consider that he's the connection between the UFC and Mexico, and that when the UFC finally does navigate the red tape to host an event in Mexico City, it'll be Velasquez who's cast as the hero/main attraction/superstar. You realise he's literally carrying power in both hands. His October fight with Junior dos Santos might be one of the biggest (weight class pun intended) trilogies in UFC history.

15 VICTOR CUI

ONE FC owner/CEO

Cui has made the loose analogy that ONE Fighting Championship is the 'UFC of Asia'. Imagine the grandeur of that comment in the context of countries—Japan, Korea, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia. And that doesn't take into account China, which is the spiritual birthplace of MMA and the covet of both ONE FC and the UFC alike. The advantage Cui has is he understands Asia, and he's only interested in harvesting Asian talent. In another couple of years, what's the potential of mining talent in a continent of nearly four billion people? Let's just say Cui could look like Rich Uncle Pennybags from the Monopoly game.

14 RANDY COUTURE

MMA legend

Even two years into retirement, he's still one of the most popular fighters out there. The five-time UFC champion owns Xtreme Couture, runs a charity, stars in movies, and even has his own cologne. Who doesn't want



to smell like Randy? His crossover appeal outside of MMA means he's the face of fighting to a lot people who aren't fans yet. Starring in Sylvester Stallone's *Expendables* franchise made him a legit movie star, and his new deal with Bellator and Viacom means we'll be seeing the 50-year-old's cauliflower ears on television for years to come.

13 GREG JACKSON

MMA trainer

The Albuquerque-based trainer created an army in the desert. Jackson boasts the largest stable of top-level fighters in all of MMA, including Jon Jones, Donald Cerrone, Carlos Condit, and Clay Guida, and that's not even counting other fighters who've called on him to supplement their normal coaching staff (Georges St-Pierre). His prestige pays off with more than just wins in the cage, as evident by his coaching stint on Bellator's *Fight Master* reality show. And, according to Dana White, he was even able to single-handedly kill UFC 151. That's real power!

12 CHAELE P. SONNEN

MMA gangster

When the gangster from West Linn talks, people listen. His gift for gab helped land him spots on some monster pay-per-views (including three UFC title shots), Fox broadcasts, *UFC Tonight*, and a slew of media opportunities from outlets who generally shy away from MMA. Whether you love or hate his shtick, no one can argue his polarizing persona doesn't draw attention. He went from a career journeyman



to one of the UFC's most recognisable faces. Few fighters could rejuvenate their careers the way Sonnen has. What does the 'P' stand for in Chael P. Sonnen? Easy. Power.

11 JOE ROGAN

UFC commentator

The UFC colour commentator is usually more famous than the fighters he's calling. MMA fans caught their first glimpse of the comedian at UFC 12 in 1997. More than 15 years later, no one is in the ear of MMA fans more than the Brazilian jiu-jitsu Black-belt, who's able to sway public opinion over a judge's decision, a controversial stoppage or the state of MMA regulation. His involvement also single-handedly made MMA the unofficial sport of comedians.

Rogan cashes giant checks from the UFC, and he never has to get punched in the face. Guess who's laughing all the way to the bank?



10 RONDA ROUSEY

UFC Women's Bantamweight Champion

Want to talk about crossover potential? Rousey, a one-time Olympic judoka, is the link between this beautifully barbaric niche sport and the ‘casuals’ who just don’t know they love it yet. In 2013, as the UFC Women’s Bantamweight Champion, she’s on magazine covers, talk shows, radio, headlines, Twitter, Nick Diaz’s butterfly guard, and every comet that shoots through the sky. How big is her potential? Royce Gracie big. She is inspiring legions of young girls to get involved in this sport. She is creating thousands of Ronda Rouseys just by being Ronda Rousey. Figuratively, she is the advancement of MMA.

9 JON JONES

UFC Light-heavyweight Champ

The Nike deal was a feather in his cap, but it still feels like Jones has barely scratched the surface of his overall potential. With a win in November, ‘Bones’ officially breaks the UFC record for Light Heavyweight Title defences. Cool? Yeah. But heavyweight is still on his horizon, and a new reign. Then the further outposts to his career: record books, UFC Hall of Fame, better Bentleys, comparisons to Ali...Jordan...Bruce Lee...Nijinsky. Are we getting ahead of ourselves? (Answer: Don’t be too sure.)

8 GEORGES ST-PIERRE

UFC Welterweight Champion

How big is Georges St-Pierre? Let’s see. He headlined the biggest live gate in UFC history (Toronto, UFC 129, 55,000 fans). He is forever linked into superfights/stadium shows with Anderson Silva. He just authored the book *The Way of the Fight*. He landed a villain role in *Captain America 2*. He has sponsors coming out the wazoo, makes millions of dollars, and he ground Nick Diaz into retirement. Is it any wonder his “dark place” doubles as a cellar for vintage wines and high-dollar champagnes?



Secret Agent Men

If you’re going to get punched in the face for a living, by damn, you might as well make that high cash — and you’re going to need an agent for that.

Ed Soares

Black House MMA

While UFC president Dana White is not shy about chiding Ed Soares for his “typical craziness” when it comes to managing his top-shelf fighters like UFC Middleweight Champion Anderson Silva, UFC Featherweight Champion Jose Aldo, Lyoto Machida, and the Nogueira brothers, the Black House MMA co-founder is the one who usually gets what his fighters want. New opponents, bigger contracts, more sponsorships? No problem. Is Ed Soares crazy? Crazy like a fox.

Glenn Robinson

Authentic Sports Management

The architect behind the Blackzilian team that boasts Vitor Belfort, Alistair Overeem, Eddie Alvarez, and Rashad Evans, Robinson has turned his South Florida base of operations into a one-stop shop for training, sponsorships and high-profile fighter exposure.

Malki Kawa

First Round Management

The self-proclaimed “Best Damn Sports Agent Around” represents some of the best damn fighters in the sport today, including UFC champions Benson Henderson and Jon Jones. He’s also highly entertaining on Twitter, where he chirps his critics, discusses his mean sneaker game, and occasionally taunts certain members of the media.

Lex McMahon

Alchemist MMA

The president of Alchemist MMA represents the likes of Rory MacDonald, Stefan

Struve, Tim Kennedy, Liz Carmouche, Brendan Schaub, and Mike Ricci. McMahon gets a healthy dose of street cred for being a Marine and lawyer (and for working alongside rap icon MC Hammer). Can’t touch Lex.

Jeff Meyer & Mike Roberts

MMA Inc.

The tag team champions of the world when it comes to fighter representation, the MMA Inc. duo works with an all-star cast of clients, including Anthony Pettis, Chael Sonnen, and Team Alpha Male standouts Urijah Faber, Chad Mendes, Joseph Benavidez, and TJ Dillashaw. We haven’t seen a tag team this well oiled since the Road Dogg and Mr Ass.

DeWayne Zinkin

Zinkin Entertainment & Sports Management

If you think Zinkin’s roster of fighters is wrestling-centric, it’s no accident — he was a two-time NCAA All-American. In addition to grapplers Cain Velasquez, Daniel Cormier, Ben Askren, Josh Koscheck, and Phil Davis, Zinkin reps Luke Rockhold, Mike Swick and a bunch more at American Kickboxing Academy in sunny San Jose.

Jason Chambers

Apex Sports Management

As a recognised TV personality, former professional mixed martial artist, and current commentator for ONE FC, Jason Chambers has the contacts and connections to make a startup agency work. With a rapidly growing roster of up-and-coming talent and some crafty vets, Apex Sports Management is out of the blocks running.

**7 KEITH KIZER**
Nevada State
Athletic Commission
executive director

Kizer directs the most scrutinized commission to ever cross our daily consciousness, acting as the sheriff behind the scale, the drug tests, the judging in Nevada, the referees, and all the acronyms — TRTs, TUEs, and TGIFs. Is it Steve Mazzagatti that Dana White puts on blast with happy regularity, or Kizer? It's Kizer. It's always Kizer. The silvery Kizer handles criticism with perfect aplomb because he represents, among other things, the very integrity of the sport. Try that on for power.

6 MARC RATNER
UFC VP of regulatory affairs
LAWRENCE EPSTEIN

UFC COO
MIKE MERSCH

UFC senior VP of business
and legal affairs/assistant
general counsel

What goes on behind the scenes at Zuffa? Ice-T might say, "madness, insanity, living in profanity..." But there are pros doing unthinkable things, too. Ratner, who came from the Nevada State Athletic Commission, has been banging down doors into new markets and educating commissions about the sport. He is Mr. Inroads. Mike Mersch deals in X's and O's with sponsors and the 400 fighters on the rosters, and Lawrence Epstein has a hand in everything — from intellectual properties to regulatory work.

5 BJORN REBNY
Bellator chairman/CEO

Bigger stars? More events? Wider audience? Since Rebney busted onto the scene with Bellator in 2008, the promotion has made gains in those



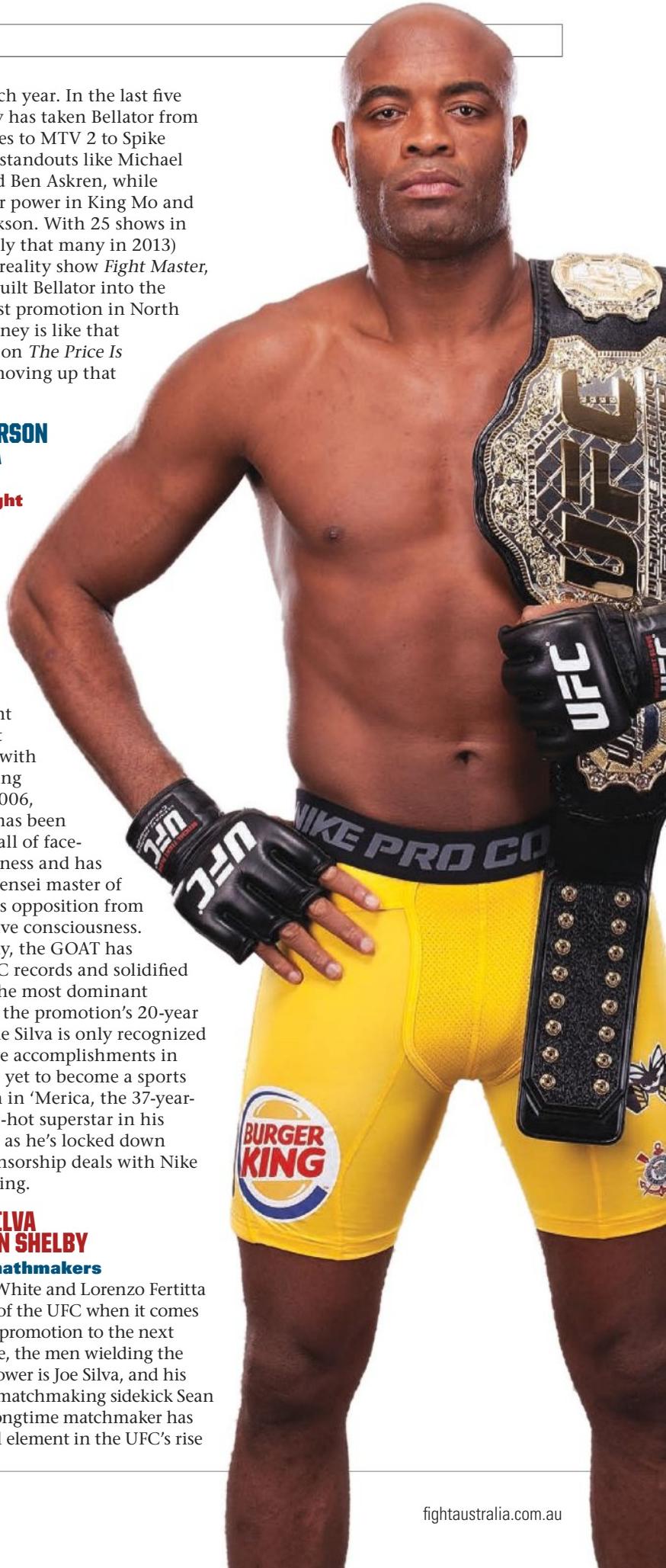
endeavors each year. In the last five years, Rebney has taken Bellator from ESPN Deportes to MTV 2 to Spike TV, building standouts like Michael Chandler and Ben Askren, while acquiring star power in King Mo and Rampage Jackson. With 25 shows in 2012 (probably that many in 2013) and the new reality show *Fight Master*, Rebney has built Bellator into the second biggest promotion in North America. Rebney is like that little yodeler on *The Price Is Right*—just moving up that mountain.

4 ANDERSON SILVA
UFC
Middleweight
Champion

When you're the greatest mixed martial artist to ever grace the cage, there is an ample amount of power that comes along with it. Since joining the UFC in 2006, 'The Spider' has been a wrecking ball of face-kicking goodness and has become the sensei master of separating his opposition from their respective consciousness. Along the way, the GOAT has shattered UFC records and solidified his place as the most dominant champion in the promotion's 20-year history. While Silva is only recognized for his in-cage accomplishments in the US and is yet to become a sports phenomenon in 'Merica, the 37-year-old is a white-hot superstar in his native Brazil, as he's locked down lucrative sponsorship deals with Nike and Burger King.

3 JOE SILVA & SEAN SHELBY
UFC mathmakers

While Dana White and Lorenzo Fertitta may be faces of the UFC when it comes to taking the promotion to the next level, in house, the men wielding the hammer of power is Joe Silva, and his former WEC matchmaking sidekick Sean Shelby. The longtime matchmaker has been a crucial element in the UFC's rise



and is primarily responsible for not only keeping the 400-fighter roster in motion, but also putting together the matchups fans want to reach into their pockets to see. There is an art to what Silva does. Finding the right fighters, who are on the same trajectory and share a similar amount of risk and reward, with a high probability of bringing the ruckus when the cage door closes, is high science where MMA is concerned. Even though the reclusive mad genius doesn't like to log much camera time, there isn't a fighter on the planet who doesn't know Silva's name.



2 **LORENZO FERTITTA**
UFC Chairman/
CEO

Dana White's mug is the public calling card for the UFC, but Lorenzo Fertitta is the rock-solid base upon which the company was built. Alongside his brother Frank Fertitta and

White, Lorenzo has been mowing down barriers and conquering new markets for nearly two decades while showing zero signs of slowing down any time soon. Where the Station Casinos owner initially provided the financial backing to White's

dream of taking the fledgling company to new levels in 2001, Fertitta has drifted into the forefront on occasion over the past few years as he's led the charge to get MMA legalised in New York. A billion dollar company and a track record of success makes Fertitta a major player in the fight game, and a well-groomed beard only solidifies his standing in the power rankings.

1 **DANA WHITE**
UFC president

You can't talk about MMA without Dana White coming to mind, and that is why he's sitting at the top of the list...

again. For more than a decade, the UFC prez has been the driving force behind the Zuffa machine and has taken the UFC from a concept on life support to a global juggernaut. As the promotion's brash-talking, no-nonsense leader, White calls things as he sees them, and he has zero issues letting the world know what's on his mind. With more than 2.5 million Twitter followers and MMA media headlines jumping with every sound bite he produces, the UFC's head honcho has become the face of the sport's most successful promotion. At the end of the day, White's cunning entrepreneurialism, bravado, and passion have made MMA the fastest growing sport on the planet. Don't be surprised if he tries to conquer the galaxy next. ☀



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MMA 101

The BANG Muay Thai System

WITH DUANE 'BANG' LUDWIG AND TJ DILLASHAW
// PHOTOS BY PAUL THATCHER

As the new striking coach for Team Alpha Male, former UFC fighter Duane 'Bang' Ludwig has come out of the gate firing. Three of his Team Alpha Male fighters (Joseph Benavidez, Chad Mendes, and TJ Dillashaw) earned knockouts on the UFC on Fox 7 card, while Urijah Faber's crisp striking helped him earn a submission win at the TUF 17 Finale.

With more than 50 kickboxing bouts and 30 MMA fights under his belt, Ludwig knows a thing or two about the striking game, and his BANG Muay Thai affiliate gyms (www.303kickboxing.com) are popping up all over the country. "The team is doing all the hard work," says Ludwig. "BMT is just helping them become even more badass ninjas."

This month, Ludwig and Team Alpha Male bantamweight TJ Dillashaw show readers a combo from the BMT System. Follow closely, as BANG Muay Thai has its own terminology. Leave it to Ludwig to create his own codes.



Duane and TJ square off in orthodox stances.



TJ begins his BANG Muay Thai '3-Shake-Fit In' combo by throwing a left jab. The goal is to get your opponent's attention by attacking upstairs. It's important to keep your feet in sync with your hands.





3
TJ throws a right cross while protecting his chin with his left hand.



4
TJ finishes his initial combo with a left hook.



5
TJ changes levels and begins his 'shake' (shaking his head to the outside) and 'fit in' (stepping with his left leg to the outside of Duane's right leg for a fake shot). Now TJ's head is to the outside and 'off the tracks', which keeps Duane from connecting with a cross or overhand.



6
As Duane's hands drop to counter/defend the shot, TJ drives forward in a southpaw stance, as if he is finishing the double-leg takedown.



7
TJ explodes upward and throws a left cross.



8
TJ finishes the combo by throwing a right hook.



OPTIONAL DOUBLE-LEG FINISH

If Duane doesn't counter/defend the shot correctly in #6, TJ can finish the double-leg by cutting the angle and driving Duane 45 degrees to end up in mount or side control.



MMA 101

Judo Toss for MMA

WITH DANILLO AND YURI VILLEFORT
// PHOTOS BY PAUL THATCHER

As the sons of Vale Tudo legend Francisco 'Master Indio' Silva, brothers Danillo and Yuri Villefort come from a prestigious fighting pedigree. Born and raised in Brazil, Danillo and Yuri have been training judo and BJJ since they were young boys. Now, both Blackzilians make their living in the cage – Yuri is signed with the UFC while Danillo is on the WSOF roster.

This month, Danillo shows readers one of his favourite judo throws at the JACO Hybrid Training Center in Delray Beach, Florida.



Yuri (left) and Danillo (right) square off in orthodox stances.



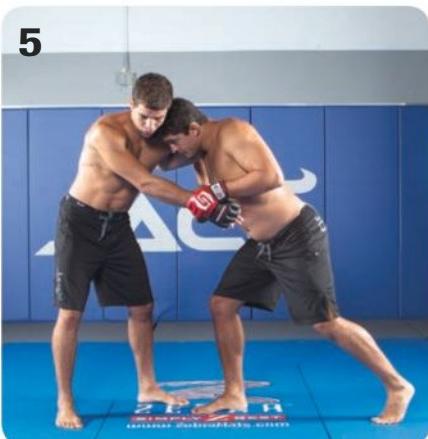
Danillo closes the distance by throwing an overhand right.



Danillo digs an underhook with his right arm and grabs wrist control with his left hand. Danillo will maintain the underhook and wrist control throughout the throw.



Danillo begins to work knees to Yuri's midsection.



Danillo maintains his underhook and wrist control. To keep Yuri in bad position, Danillo uses his head to block Yuri's head.



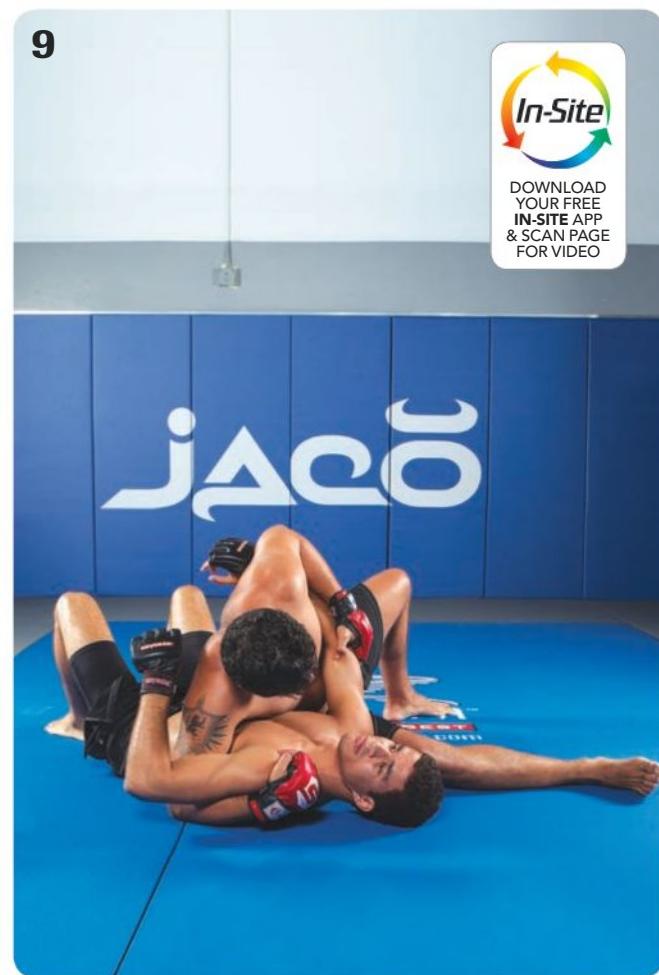
Instead of throwing another knee, Danillo steps with his left foot to the outside of Yuri's right foot and uses his underhook to drive Yuri off balance.



Danillo continues to drive forward, forcing Yuri to put all of his weight on his right leg. Danillo lifts his right leg off the mat to move into position to attack Yuri's right leg.



Danillo slides his right leg to the outside of Yuri's right leg while popping his hips and sending Yuri airborne.



Danillo lands in full control, keeping the underhook and sliding his left hand from wrist control to elbow control. ☠

CARDIO FOR DAYS

Embrace the suffering to take your fitness to a new level.

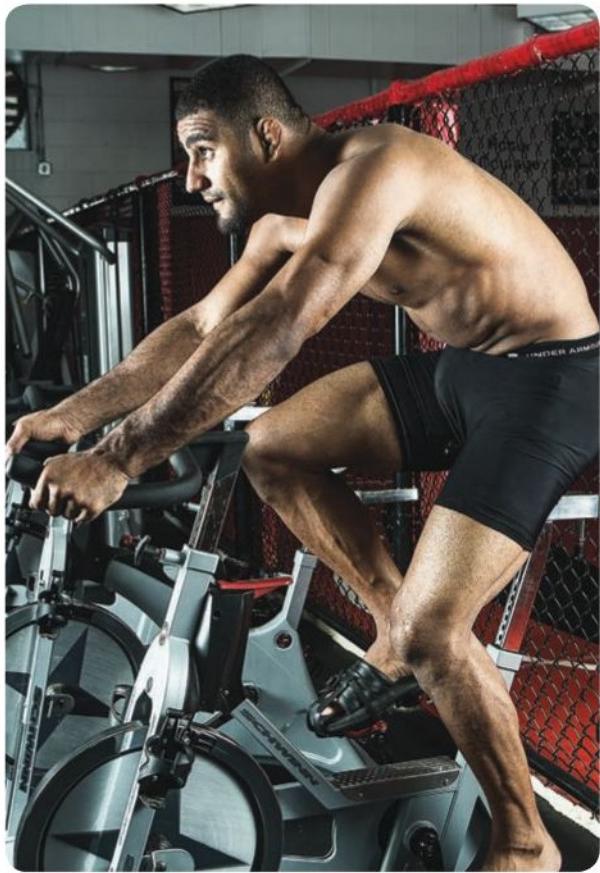
BY DR. RICK KATTOUF II // PHOTOS BY PAUL THATCHER

Athletes are always looking for ways to take their fitness to the next level. Many times, one of the key components is teaching your mind and body to embrace the suffering experienced during challenging workouts and training sessions. However, suffering during workouts is not about pushing your body to injury – it's about raising your own personal ceiling and taking your body and mind outside of your comfort zone.

Here are two workouts that will train your muscular system, aerobic energy system and your anaerobic energy system. Implementing these workouts into your training regimen will enable your body to go longer, harder, and faster before you fatigue.



Stationary Bike



THE POWERHOUSE

1. Push-ups: 25 reps
2. Sit-ups: 25 reps
3. Burpees: 25 reps
4. Jump Squats: 25 reps
5. Stationary Bike: 6 minutes

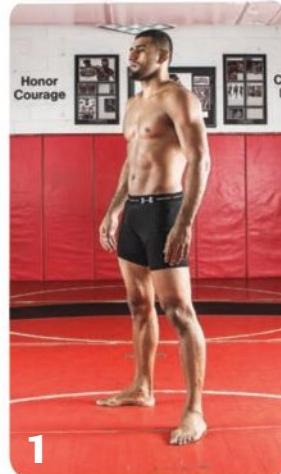
► Perform exercises 1-4 without resting. Get on a stationary bike and remain seated for six minutes, keeping the bike at 70-77 RPMs. Add as much resistance as you can to maintain the prescribed RPMs. Unlike the Sprint Workout, where your goal is 100+ RPMs to work the cardiovascular system, the Powerhouse Workout uses a high amount of resistance and lower RPMs, which will significantly tax your muscular system (quads, calves, glutes, and hamstrings). This is one circuit.

Your goal is to complete six nonstop circuits for a total of 150 repetitions per exercise and 36 minutes of cycling.



Before and after each workout, warm up and cool down by stretching and riding the stationary bike for 10 minutes. Don't forget to keep your body fuelled and hydrated throughout the circuits.

Jump Squats



1



2

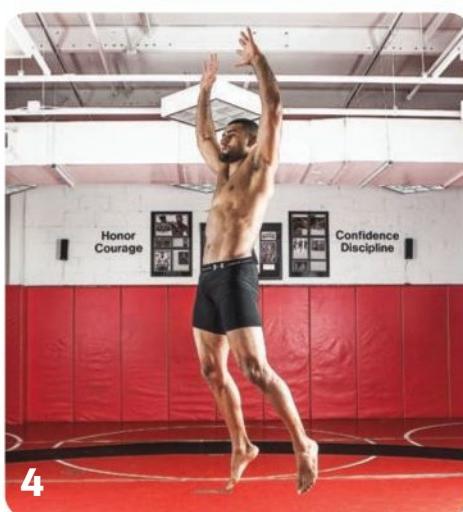
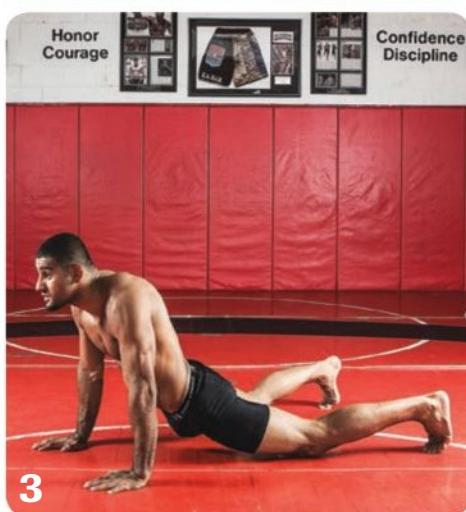
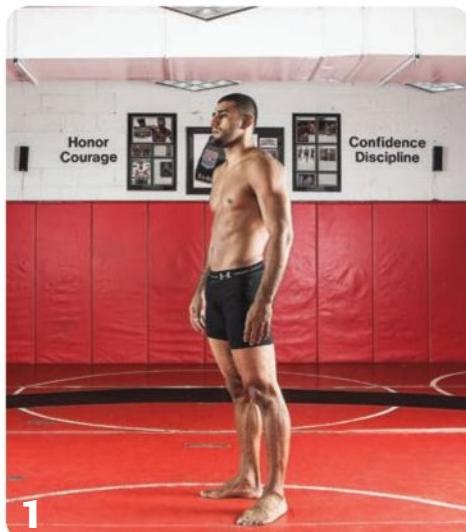
If you are ready to embrace the suffering and take your fitness to the next level, incorporate both of these workouts each week. Replace one of your standard cardiovascular workouts with the Sprint or Powerhouse. The workouts can be done one to two times per week. Wear a heart rate monitor during each workout to monitor your progress over time.

THE SPRINT

1. Push-ups: 25 reps
2. Sit-ups: 25 reps
3. Burpees: 25 reps
4. Jump Squats: 25 reps
5. Stationary Bike: 6 minutes

► Perform exercises 1-4 without resting. Get on a stationary bike and remain seated for five minutes, keeping the bike at 100+ RPMs. This is designed to tax your cardiovascular system. For the final minute on the bike, stand up and sprint as fast as you can. This is one circuit.

Your goal is to complete six nonstop circuits for a total of 150 repetitions per exercise and 36 minutes of cycling. 💡

Burpees**Push-ups & Sit-ups**



KRAZY FOR KALE

Fuelling your body is the key to unleashing your maximum performance and recovery.

BY DAWN REPPUCCI, RD/LD

Over the past few years, kale has become the edible darling of nutritionists, fitness professionals and certified health nuts. With its versatility and off-the-charts nutrient profile, kale deserves all the 'Hail to the Kale' recognition.

Kale is a member of the Brassica oleracea species, along with other well-known members broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, cabbage and other spring greens. With darker, curlier, more textured appearance than lettuce, its superstar powers certainly don't stem from its looks. The antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and anti-cancer properties it brings to the table, however, make it gorgeous on the inside.

There are many varieties out there, but the two most commonly found in your produce section tend to be curly kale, with its ruffled leaves, deep green colour, and bright peppery to bitter flavours (best for kale chips); and dinosaur or Tuscan kale, with its narrower blue-green leaves and slightly sweeter, more delicate taste (great for a steamed or sautéed side dish). When making your pick, look for deeply coloured leaves without signs of yellowing, browning, wilting or holes. Bunches with smaller sized leaves also

tend to yield tender and mild-tasting finished dishes.

ON THE KALE TRAIL

The nutrient content and health benefits of this low-calorie, high-fibre vegetable are impressive. Kale boasts significant levels of iron, vitamin K, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium (actually better absorbed by your body than from dairy milk), vitamin B6, antioxidant carotenoids and flavonoids (lutein, beta-carotene, zeaxanthin, and quercetin), and a strong group of natural anti-cancer compounds. Thanks to this arsenal of nutrients, kale has the ability to kick inflammation to the curb while supporting your cardiovascular system, liver detoxification pathways, bone health, vision and immune function.

The easiest way to use kale is by simply throwing it into smoothies, fresh juices and salads. You can also steam kale as a side dish at dinner or make oven-roasted kale chips for a snack. Raw kale can take some getting used to, as even the sweeter varieties can be tough and bitter. One way around this, as strange as it sounds, is the kale massage. With or without olive oil – and with the fibrous stems removed – grab bunches with both hands and rub together. A few minutes into this eco-friendly, deep-tissue rubdown, the leaves will begin to appear darker, smaller, and silkier in texture, as well as less bitter in taste.

QUICK AND EASY

Cooking ideas include sautéed kale with fresh minced garlic or braised with chopped apples. Add kale to your scrambled eggs and omelettes, hearty soups, bean and quinoa bowls, or as a vegie side with your favourite baked chicken and sweet potato dishes. You'll be krazy for kale in no time. ☺



Vitamin K is responsible for proper blood clotting. If you're on blood thinners, please consult your doctor before adding kale or other vitamin K rich foods to your diet, as they can interfere with your medication.

KALE & APPLE SAUTÉ

Ingredients:

- 1 bunch kale of choice, washed, stems removed, chopped
- 450 grams apples, peeled, cored, and chopped
- 1 sweet or red onion, chopped
- 2 tsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 tbs extra virgin olive oil or coconut oil
- Sea salt and black pepper to taste

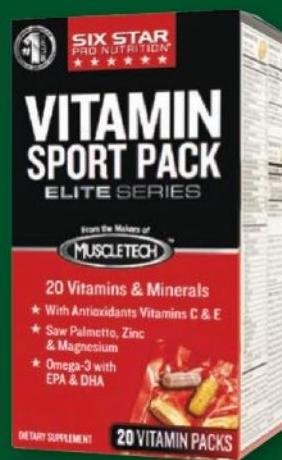
Instructions:

Heat oil in sauté pan. Add onions and cook until tender (four minutes). Add apples, vinegar, salt and pepper. Cover and cook until apples are just tender (four minutes). Stir kale into pan. Cook covered until kale is tender (three minutes).



PACK A PUNCH

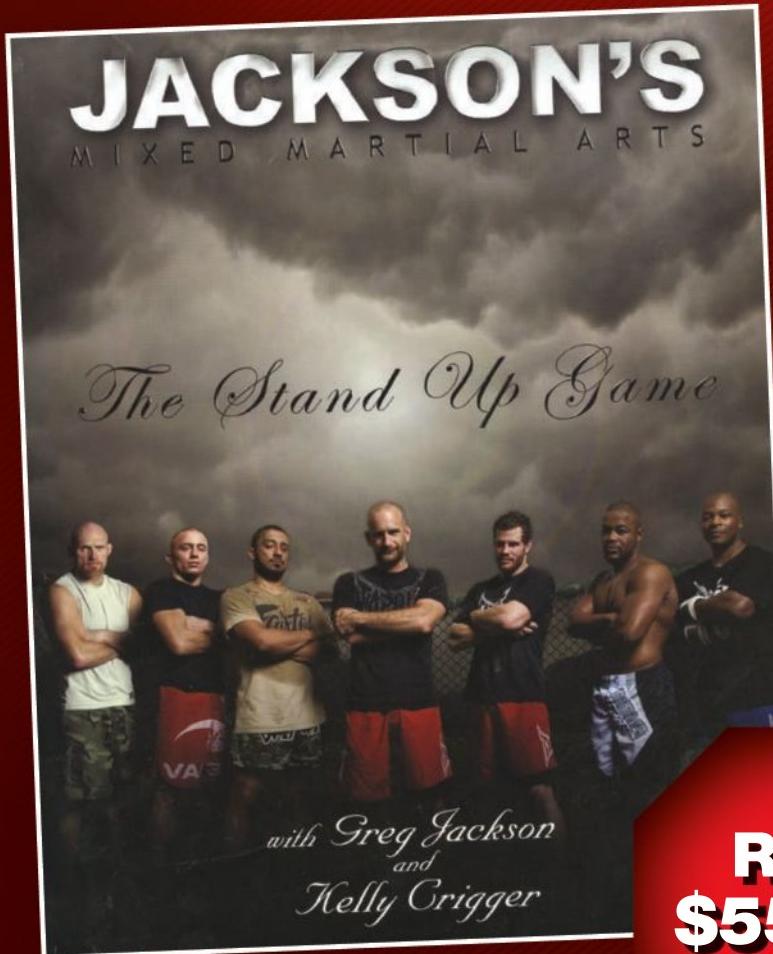
Can't always get your daily dose of kale and all of its nutritional benefits? Six Star Vitamin Sport Pack features more than 100 per cent of the suggested daily values of vitamins C and E as well as vitamin B6, riboflavin, selenium, manganese and thiamin. Plus, Vitamin Sport Pack provides a good source of calcium, zinc, magnesium and many other vitamins and minerals.



JACKSON'S

MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

- THE STAND UP GAME



With Greg Jackson & Kelly Crigger

Greg Jackson is the most accomplished and celebrated mixed martial arts coach in the world. In Jackson's Mixed Martial Arts, he brings you into his stable of fighters, which includes UFC Welterweight Champion Georges St. Pierre, UFC Light Heavyweight Champion Rashad Evans, UFC Light Heavy weight contender Keith Jardine, and UFC Middleweight contender Nate Marquardt.

For the first time, he unveils his methods for developing fight strategies, detailing everything you must accomplish from the time you sign the contract up to the moment you step foot into the cage. He unleashes for the first time his arsenal of stand-up striking techniques that have allowed his fighters to dominate the world of mixed martial arts. He divulges dozens of striking combinations, counterstriking combinations, takedowns, and throws.

He also includes his street fighting system, which was developed over several years of trial and error. If your goal is to rise to the top of the MMA mountain, Jackson's Mixed Martial Arts is a mandatory tool.

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COREY NELSON

MAJOR PAIN

COREY NELSON



BY NEIL ROOKE // PHOTOS COURTESY AFC & NITRO/PENGHUYNH

The *Ultimate Fighter* series has had its fair share of characters throughout the 12 years it has aired. There have been clowns – literally, perceived ‘bad guys’ and every now and again there is a fighter that has that little bit of something – that star power you can see from really early on in the show’s taping.

With his dominance over the welterweight division on Australian soil, there is no doubt that *Corey ‘Major’ Nelson* will be a very likely candidate to don the Australian jersey in this year’s version of the reality series, and with all of his championship credential he has the potential to be that ‘star’.





I'm the top guy in Australia at the moment and I really think that I should get in. Really, there is nobody else for me to beat and I've been kicking arse in Australia. I am riding five wins in a row but, really, if I do get to go in there [to *The Ultimate Fighter*], I have no right to be cocky," Nelson says. "I haven't done anything over there [in North America], it's as if I have to start all over again, but I am ready for that and I am ready to test myself against the best in the world.

"I'm not going in there expecting anything and I am ready for anything that is put in front of me. I want to fight in the UFC; that is my goal. I think I have been winning enough fights and I think I am ready to test myself. In my mind, you haven't won anything until you are winning in the UFC and that's exactly where I want to be."

For Nelson, *The Ultimate Fighter* experience is going to be more about what can be said inside the cage rather than the antics onscreen in front of the camera. With every season there is a desire for some fighters to create a name for themselves by being the 'top dog' inside the house; Nelson plans to give Australia (and the world) an insight into what a genuine, down-to-earth

fighter can do when his dream is put right in front of him.

"They can expect a great Aussie bloke going in there and giving a whole lot of shit to the Canadians," Nelson laughed. "I don't think I'll be any different on camera to what I am normally, the main thing is that I'll be going in there to try and knock their heads off in the cage and be the one who people remember."

The Ultimate Fighter: Nations is the second series of the UFC's successful reality show that features Australia squaring off with another team from around the world. This time around, Australia faces off with Canada, and Team Australia is set to be coached by Kyle 'KO' Noke, which is something that Nelson would love to experience.

"It'd be unreal to be coached by him [Noke]," Nelson says. "I have heard he's a good bloke and I am sure that anybody in the team would feel privileged to be coached by someone who trains in an elite camp with a great of the sport like Greg Jackson. I think we are going to be in great hands."

Around the midway point of 2011, Nelson posted the second loss of his career, which was one month later followed by his third and then the first fight that he had in 2012 became his fourth. It was three losses in a row

"REALLY, THERE IS NOBODY ELSE FOR ME TO BEAT AND I'VE BEEN KICKING ARSE IN AUSTRALIA. I AM RIDING FIVE WINS IN A ROW."



Nelson pounces on Alex Volkanovski





Nelson showing off his Nitro title belt



and while two of the three losses came from contestants who would later join team Australia in *The Ultimate Fighter: The Smashes*, Nelson knew where he was going wrong and worked hard to correct his mistakes.

"I was having a really rough time outside of the cage," Nelson revealed. "My head just wasn't in it. I wasn't completely focussed on fighting or training. They were tough fights, especially against [Benny] Alloway and [Robert] Whittaker. I had it in my head that things just didn't go my way and I guess I had excuses all ready for the losses. In this sport you have to be completely focused otherwise you aren't going to get anywhere. I just had to come back stronger than ever in my next fights and that's exactly what I have done."

On July 13 this year, Nelson added another Australian title to his collection when he defeated Ian Bone by unanimous decision for the Nitro MMA Welterweight Title. The bout not only gave Nelson another piece of gold but also put him undisputedly at the top of the welterweight rankings in Australia.



"I HAVE ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT I WAS NUMBER ONE IN THE COUNTRY AT WELTERWEIGHT, AND BEATING IAN BONE, WHO SOME THOUGHT WAS THE BEST FIGHTER TOO, JUST MAKES EVERYONE SEE THAT I AM THE BEST."



"It felt good to get that win and it cements my spot at the top of the division," Nelson says. "I have always thought that I was number one in the country at welterweight, and beating Ian Bone, who some thought was the best fighter too, just makes everyone see that I am the best guy on the local circuit. I now have the Nitro title, the BRACE title, the TUFFA title and the crown from Golden Lion Promotions up in Townsville. The only one left for me to get in the country is the AFC one and that's right in front of me."

Over the past year, Nelson has fought a total of six times, which is quite a difference to the usual three to a maximum of four times a year that the fighters in the UFC compete, but to

Nelson it's not only seen as a necessity, it's also a desire.

"My whole career I've been active. That's just who I am," he says. "I like to fight and as long as I am fit and healthy I will always be looking for a fight. The more you fight the more your name gets out there and the more wins you get the bigger your name gets."

Having a day job or a nine to five, as some would call it, is something that most aspiring professional fighters need to have in order to survive. Having an employer who is able to be flexible and also understands the passion that a fighter has to excel in their craft is something that not all fighters can attest to having. Nelson not only has that, but he also has

other people behind him giving him support, which he is grateful for.

"I work with my brother so the job is always going to be there," Nelson says. "He's really supportive and knows that if the chance comes for me to chase my dream that I am going to take it. That's what is good for me, I have such a great support network around me and I have so many people that want to see me do well."

"KMA, Century Martial Arts, Fighters Against Child Abuse Australia and Armour Mouthguards have all been there for me and while I may not have a major sponsor just yet I know that having these people around me helps a lot; that is what is important to me. I want to go into the UFC for them and I want to show that I truly am the best fighter that Australia has."

With his championship belts and a crown in tow, Nelson is ready for the next big step in his career. When a fighter has the opportunity to test themselves on the world stage of mixed martial arts it presents a whole new set of obstacles to overcome.

In Australia, Nelson has already overcome his obstacles, his five-fight winning-streak is evidence of that, and his recent dominance on the local circuit has meant that he is the 'king of the welterweights'. The chance to compete in *The Ultimate Fighter* not only gives Australia's next potential star the opportunity to undertake the next phase of his career, it also brings the chance for him to extend his 'empire'.



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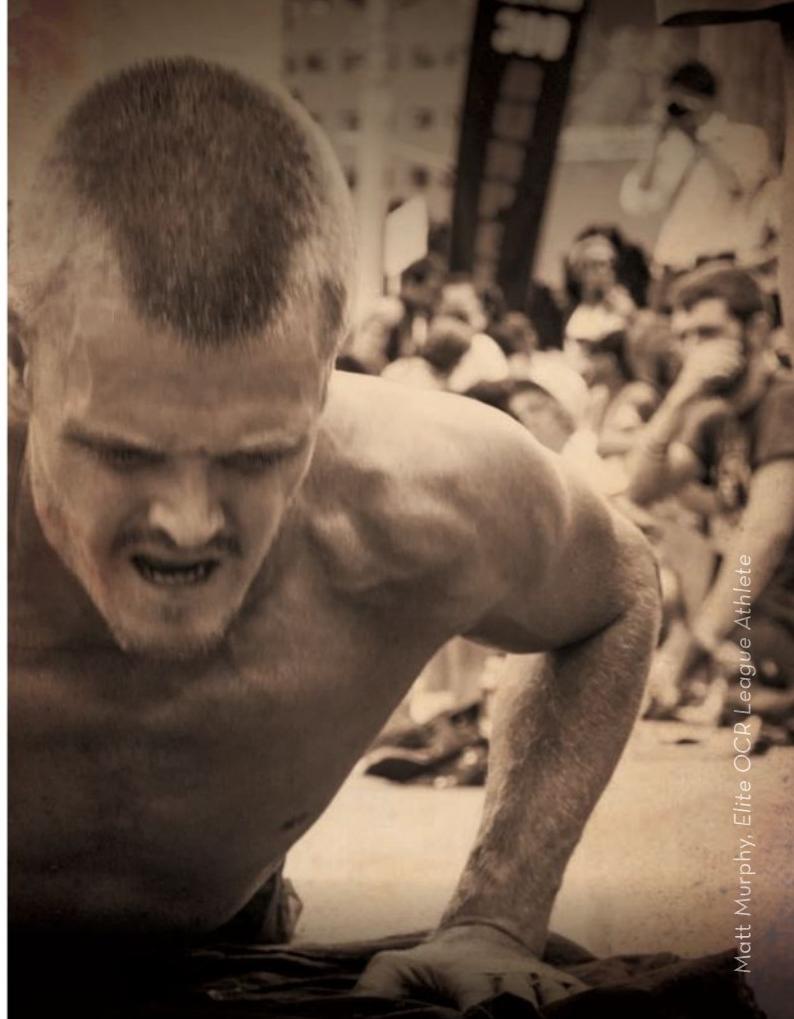
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THE HUMAN HIGHLIGHT REEL

IT REQUIRES A BALLISTICS TEAM TO TRACK ANTHONY PETTIS WHILE HE'S GETTING HIS KICKS—AND NOW (AT LONG LAST) HE'S AIMING FOR UFC TITLEHOLDERS.

BY CHUCK MINDENHALL / PHOTOS BY PAUL THATCHER

The Soka Gakkai International Buddhist Center wouldn't seem to fit neatly in America's Dairyland, but then there it is — right where Duke Roufus's gym should be on the GPS. Across the street is the more prototypical Milwaukee. That's where Brewski's Bar and Grill sits, with full rows of proud local taps, not far from where Roufus's old gym was. For years, Roufus — a national treasure in the world of eight limbs — pummeled heavy bags while envisioning human rib cages at that location. But not anymore. To the side of the Buddhist centre is an ATM drive-thru, and in that very ordinary area of strip mall, through a

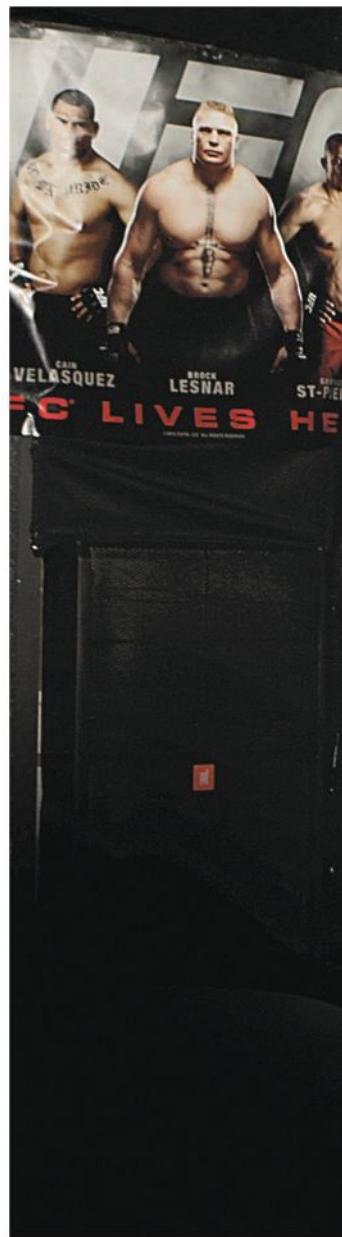
side door and down some stairs, is the place where Anthony Pettis walks on walls as if rehearsing Chinese wire fu stunts.

The new Roufusport is a house of game-changers and ass-kickers.

Inside is Chico Camus, who laughs when people pronounce his name like the French writer Albert Camus. "It's KAY-Muss," he says, "not Kaw-MOO." He's a hissing live wire of a bantamweight. Then there's Pascal Krauss, the German. In a few minutes, he'll kick Bellator Welterweight Champion Ben Askren in the balls while sparring, and this will crack everybody up (including Askren, who, I'm told,

A dynamic action shot of Anthony Pettis in mid-air, performing a high kick. He is shirtless, wearing white and black shorts with a yellow waistband featuring a cartoon character. He has two portraits tattooed on his chest. His mouth is wide open in a yell. A large, jagged hole in the dark background behind him reveals a bright, glowing interior, suggesting he has just broken through a window or wall.

ANTHONY PETTIS



has a psychopathic threshold for pain). There's Sergio Pettis, the kid brother and next prodigious Pettis we'll hear from. "He didn't get to live much between the ages of 16 and 19 years old," Anthony says, "because he's always in here training."

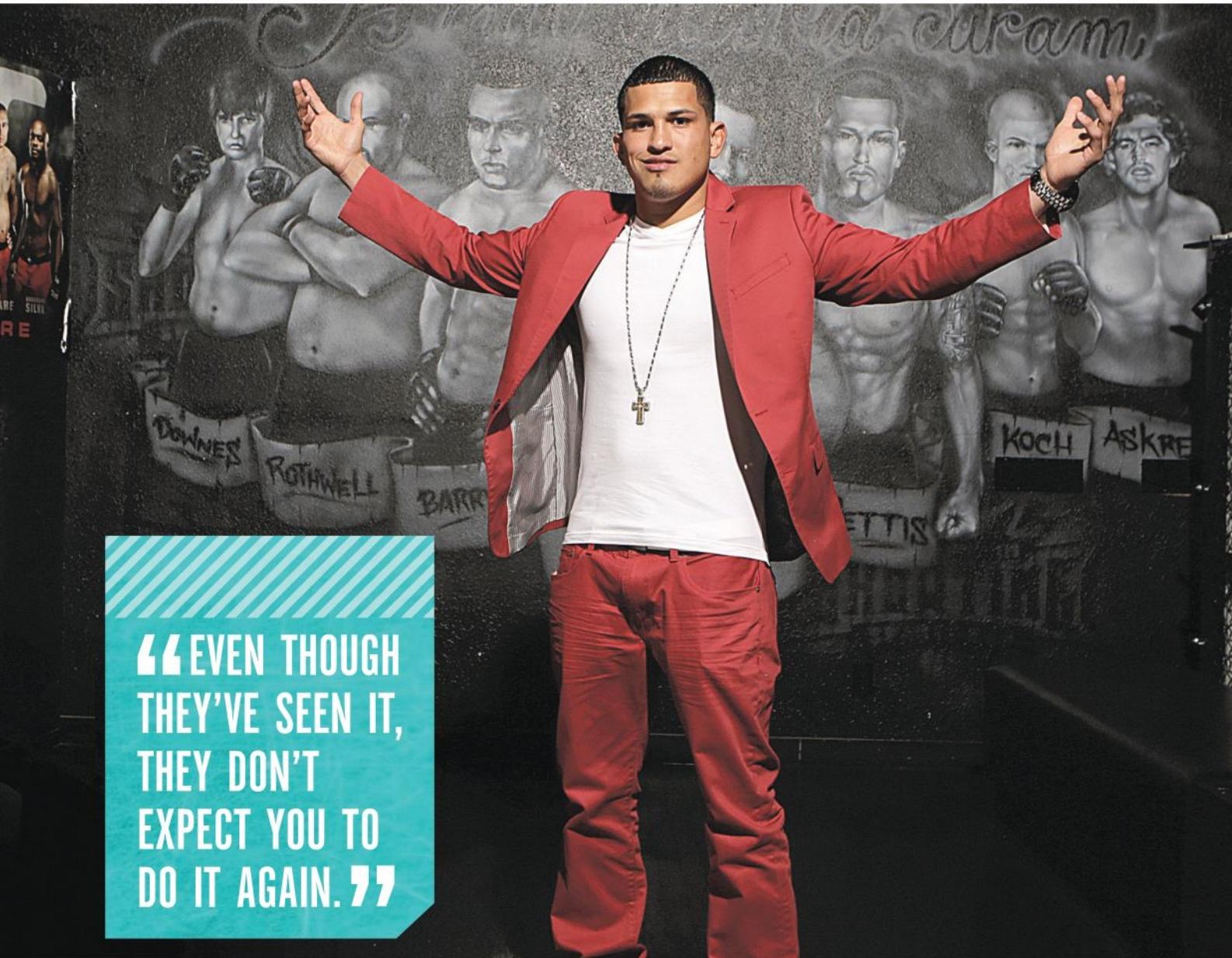
Chico, Pascal, and Sergio. Such 'other era' names would seem better suited for a French parlour than a Midwestern training facility. At the centre of the room is Anthony 'Showtime' Pettis, a Milwaukee original from the south side. The man who ricocheted himself off the fence to down Benson Henderson en-route to winning the WEC Lightweight Title in late 2010. He's strutting around at 175 pounds. "My size right now is not

big for a 155-pounder," he says. "But it is for a 145-pounder." To make it to featherweight, he'd have to lose nearly one-fifth of his physical being. His skin is so perfect that it appears airbrushed. He has barbershop good looks, with no distortions of the nose...no scar tissue on the brow...no vegetation on the ears...no gnarled knuckles. The posters on the wall tell you he plies the grim trade, but you wouldn't know it from looking at him. Through 18 pro fights, he's still in near mint condition. Noticeably, Roufusport doesn't have an Octagon like so many gyms these days — instead, it has a large blue and yellow rectangle. This is the playpen of innovation in which Pettis and company do work. On this day, it's

where Askren demonstrates 'bundle wrestling', in which he has Krauss wadded against the fence where he can "sneak in three or four punches" before breaking. It's also a tract of fencing that Pettis treats as a human springboard when the opportunity presents itself.

"I play around with using the fence," he says. "I do it all the time in practice, and I'm sparring with some really good guys, we get a lot of good guys coming to the gym. It's just different — guys don't expect it. Even though they've seen it, they don't expect you to do it again."

We've all seen it. It's perhaps the single most talked about strike in the history of MMA, the one moment when modern martial arts came damn



“EVEN THOUGH THEY’VE SEEN IT, THEY DON’T EXPECT YOU TO DO IT AGAIN.”

close to our collective 1970s kung fu fantasy — that beautiful pinball kick off the fence that whiplashed Benson Henderson into the ages (and, it could be argued, greatness). It has been played and replayed so often as to become one of Pettis' greatest peeves. “It used to annoy me when people brought it up,” he says, “but I’m over it.” Not that he blames them for bringing it up, either. It was an action sequence that was almost too perfect to be anything other than choreography.

And yet, it wasn’t. It was Pettis being Pettis, and Pettis is a product of the Thai-trained boxer Roufus, and Roufus is — if anything — a man of spacious ideas. He’s a man who can watch films like *Ong-Bak* and bring out its concepts,

or *Dogtown and Z-Boys* and say, Hey, you know what? In a situation where velocity, gravity, and force are in play, there’s a practical way to walk on the walls around you in a fight.

Roufus is a fanciful visionary who just happens to have a protégé in the room capable of carrying out his most absurd flights of fancy. Pettis, of course, ultimately hones his craft. But he and Roufus — who can also be a strict disciplinarian — have rare synergy.

“This gym’s not a fit for everybody,” Roufus says. “If you don’t show up for practice, I’m on your ass. My grandfather was a sergeant major in the Army, from World War II to Vietnam. Growing up around here, my mindset is it’s the Holy Trinity — Lombardi,

Patton, and MacArthur — at least in coaching. Outside the gym, I’m a pretty chill guy. But let’s face it, it’s fighting. No one remembers second place.”

The space between first and second place is where Pettis has hovered off and on for a couple of years. He won the WEC belt just as the promotion merged into the UFC. “Now, I keep it at my house in a display case above my fireplace,” he says. Yet, he never got to defend it in the blue cage. Pettis has been trying to get his shot at UFC gold for the entire FOX-era of Zuffa.

This year, it’s been more of the same. For four long months in 2013 he was slated to face the one man who could match him reel-for-reel in ridiculous highlights: Featherweight Champion Jose



ANTHONY PETTIS



Aldo. That meant a cut to 145 pounds and a monkey wrench in the structure of the 145- and 155-pound divisions. But then the curve ball (yet again). Pettis suffered a knee injury while doing some light training with Phil Davis in Brazil, and that plan was scotched.

Which means Pettis' sights are set back on the man whom he says never lets his name cross his lips...the man carrying around the UFC Lightweight Title...the man who plans to smash all of Anderson Silva's records — Benson Henderson. Pettis stands in his way. We'll never know where the sidewalk ends until those two paths cross each other again.



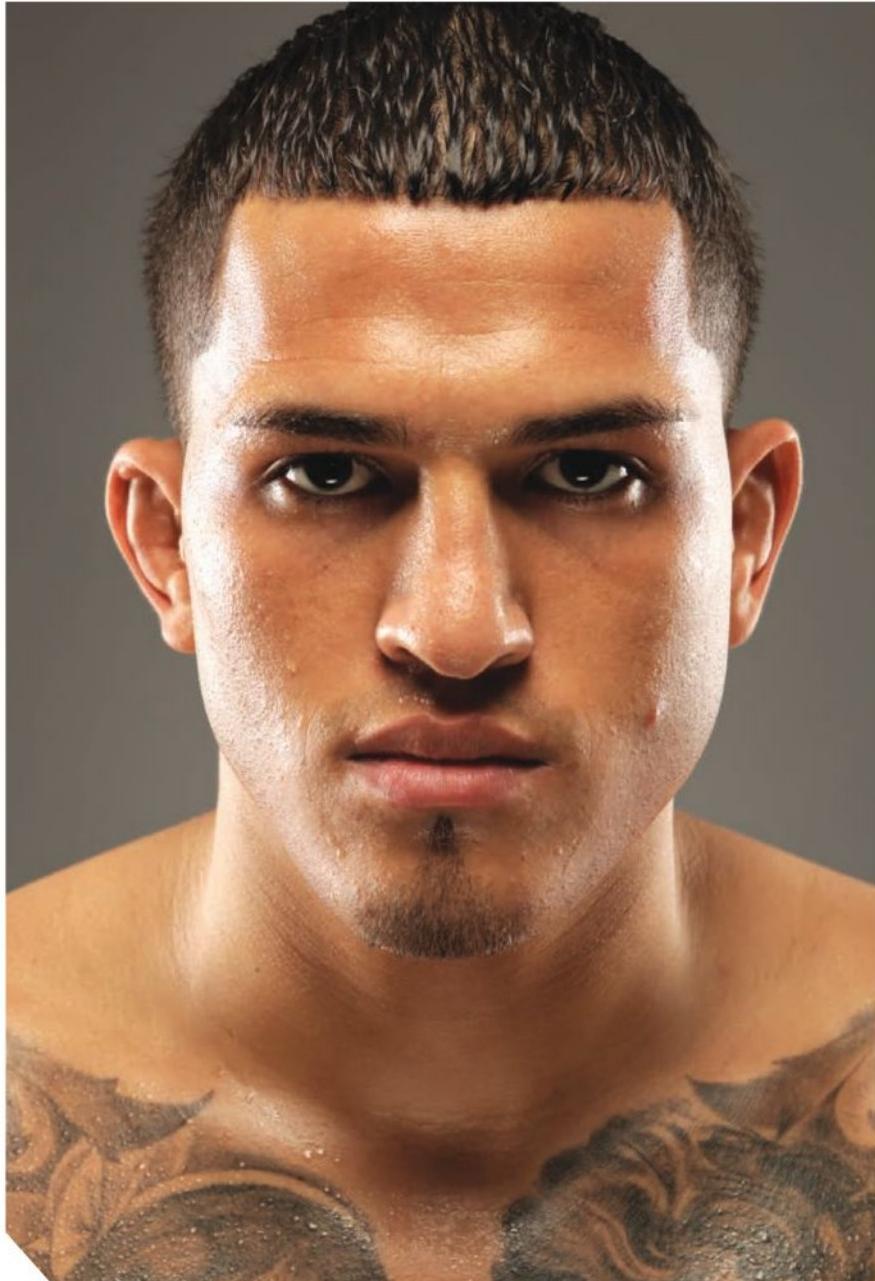
"I see it happening the same way," Pettis says of the rematch. "I think my style is one of them styles that's hard to prepare for. Henderson likes to strike, and he likes to be at a distance. That's all me. That's what I dominate at."

Pettis has a reason to be confident in a repeat with Henderson. He was able to win a unanimous decision, where he thwarted many of the things Henderson likes to do. He matched Henderson's cardio, a tough feat in itself, and picked him apart on the feet. One of the things Henderson told *FIGHT! Magazine* he'd do in a rematch with Pettis is to take away that range and use his grappling and wrestling more.

"The thing is, he did wrestle me in that first fight," Pettis says. "I stuffed takedowns, and I took him down. It's going to be another match-up — we're both the top guys at 155. I decided to go down to 45, but got the knee injury, so we'll do it again."

Pettis is a little unnerving in how eager he is to perch himself headlong into daunting circumstances. Had his fight with Aldo happened, it would have been in front of a partisan crowd in Aldo's native Brazil. In other words, Pettis would have been lowered into the cauldron to take on a top-five pound-for-pound fighter on the planet. At this, he never balked, because that's just how he rolls. Remember, when he fought Henderson the first time, it was in Arizona, where Henderson lives and trains. It's safe to say that a crowd's rooting interest doesn't carry sway with him.

"I have that tunnel vision like crazy — I kind of know where things are coming from," he says. "Here's how I know I'm on for a fight. When I walk out, I get into this zone when I look into the Octagon and things just blur. I



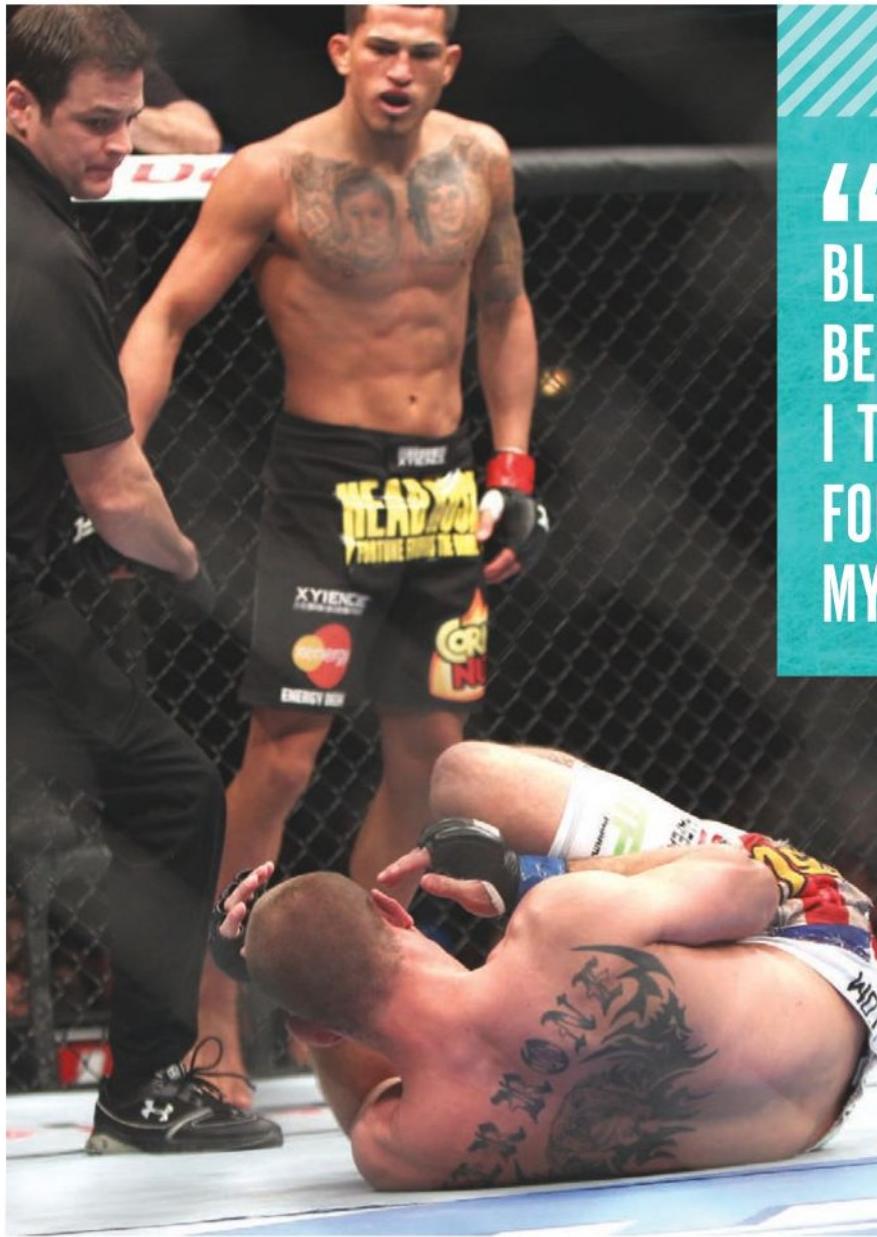
zoom in on my opponent, and I don't take my eyes off him until my hand's raised. I feel it when I'm in there, but then when I watch it, it's crazy. I see it before it happens. I train so much for it, I can break my opponent."

Pettis himself is not so easily broken. This stems from a childhood spent in urban Milwaukee rooting for the Packers and doing taekwondo from the time he was five years old. By nine, he began boxing, at first with his cousins. "My mom wouldn't let me box for real because she didn't want me to get hit in my face," he says. Smart move. That face stayed so endorsement fresh over the years that Roufus, a decade later,

tried to stick him with the nickname 'Pretty Boy' Pettis. It didn't take.

But before he found Roufus — and maybe unconsciously because of it — Pettis lost his father to a neighborhood homicide. "My dad was stabbed in the chest in a street robbery across from my house, right before I turned 16 years old," he says. "I kind of gave up on everything after that. I didn't want to do taekwondo, I didn't want to do anything. I barely graduated high school. I was just going through the motions — in life, too."

He went to the fire academy and worked as a paid on-call fireman for six months after high school before realising it wasn't for him. At loose



ends and teaching taekwondo locally, he made the fateful decision to call on Roufus, in large part to pick up kickboxing and expand his curriculum into the burgeoning world of MMA.

The rest, as the cliché goes, is history.

"Duke always said, from the moment I walked in I had something different," Pettis says. "From day one, he said, 'You're going to be a star — you're going to be a champ.' I always played it off, like maybe he says that to everybody. But I got my first amateur fight after three months of training, and I won in like 20 seconds... and won the next one in 20 seconds, and the next one in 20 seconds. Duke said, 'You know what, let's go pro.' It all happened in maybe nine months, from the time I walked into Duke's to the WEC contract."

A year-and-a-half after debuting in the WEC against Mike Campbell, Pettis was the promotion's last standing champion. In a space of less than four years, Pettis went from anonymous taekwondo teacher in the Land of Leinenkugel to one of MMA's great lightweights. Better yet, along the way, Roufus found the nickname to suit his emerging star.

Pettis became 'Showtime'.

"Anthony was fighting Mike Lambrecht, a wrestler, and he got slammed and his shoulder was dislocated," Roufus says. "He popped his shoulder out, but he somehow found a way to stand up, with his shoulder dangling. Then — boom! — knocks the guy out cold with a head kick. That's how I came up with the

“THINGS JUST BLUR... I SEE IT BEFORE IT HAPPENS. I TRAIN SO MUCH FOR IT, I CAN BREAK MY OPPONENT.”

name. When the lights come on, he just comes to life. Anthony trains well, and he gets even higher on fight night. He likes to compete."

He does. 'Showtime' is the stormy sky sitting over Henderson's reign. He is 1-0 against the champ. Before he got the chance to duplicate the feat in the UFC for everybody to see, Clay Guida derailed him, using blue-collar wrestling to nullify Pettis' range game. That set Pettis back behind a pack of contenders, just as Henderson began his run. He rebounded with a conservative victory over Jeremy Stephens at UFC 136. "Had I been coming off a win, it'd have been a totally different fight," he says.

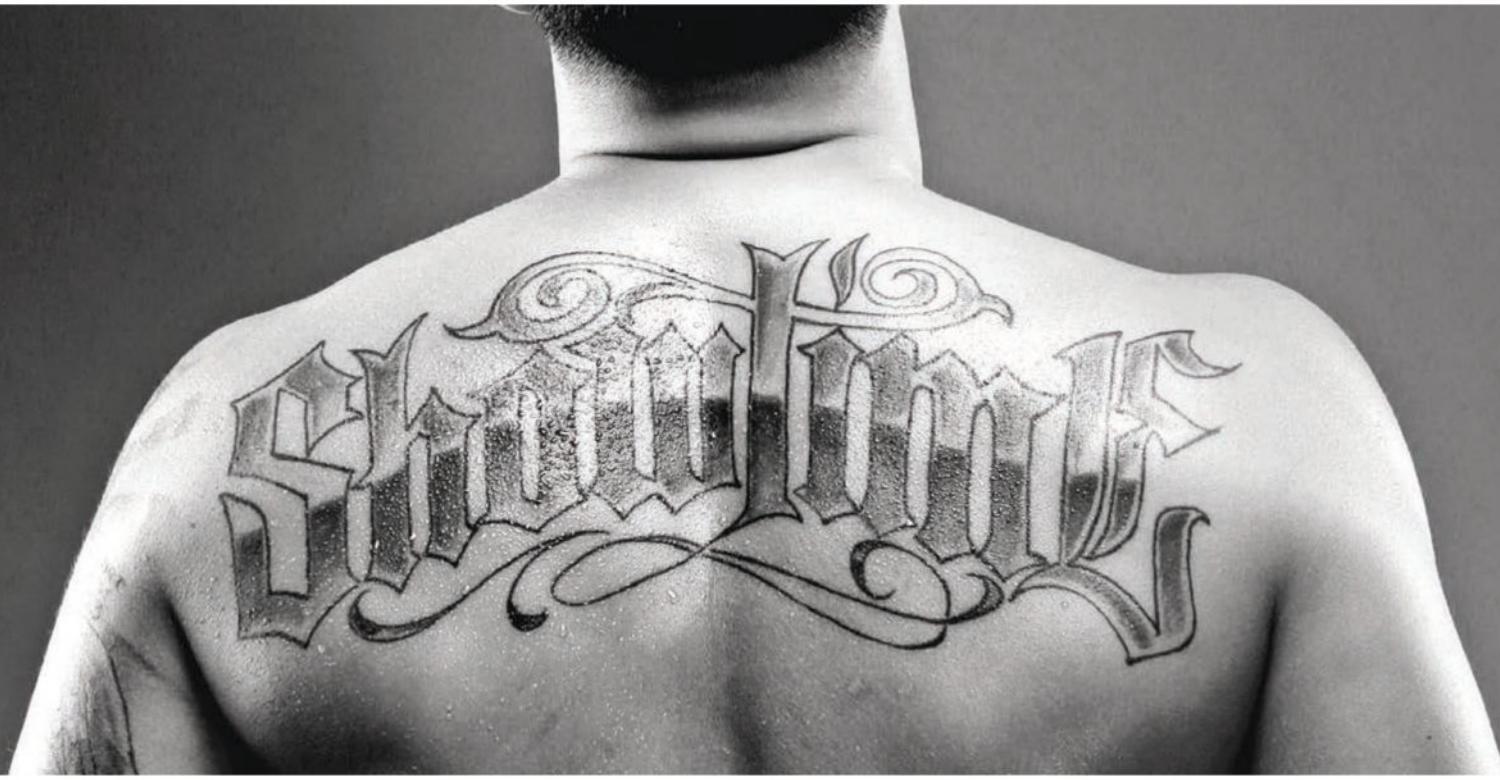
What's the difference between Pettis coming off a win and Pettis coming off a loss? Ask Joe Lauzon and Donald Cerrone, two top-10 lightweights who found out the hard way how Pettis performs without pressure. Both were knocked out by the halfway point of the first round. Both were posterised — Lauzon via a head kick and Cerrone by a liver kick that crumpled him where he stood.

"That's the dangerous Anthony Pettis," Pettis says in the unrestricted third person, flashing a row of pearly teeth. "That's when he jumps off walls and kicks people in the head and hands out knees."

Heading into his next fight, it should be noted that he's coming off a win.



Before fighters owned gyms, they owned bars. In this way — and



perhaps in this way alone — Pettis is a throwback to Jack Dempsey. He co-owns the Showtime Sports Bar, which is part of a compound meant to bewilder the senses. Downstairs is Jokerz Comedy Club. Right next-door is The Silk, a gentlemen's club with a million marquee bulbs. It's one-stop shopping for multitasking Midwestern heathens: it's laughs, libido, and Jager shots. The central attraction on fight night, though, is Pettis's place, where the sharp-dressed celebrity owner is known to have a good time when not training.

Inside, the walls are painted black, but they are heavily muralled with figures that look drawn from rising smoke — Erik Koch, Pat Barry, Danny 'Boy' Downes and Ben Askren are part of the action-hero artwork. Then there's Duke Roufus, and the Pettis brothers, and their late father, Eugene, hovering over Milwaukee's best like a protective spirit. When Pettis fights, the bartender Ashley says, "It's a madhouse in here." When he took on Cerrone in Chicago, the bar ran busses down I-94 to the event. On the flat screens, MMA

fights are playing continuously. During any live UFC pay-per-view, they run specials, five cold longnecks for \$15. "The happy hour is the longest in the city, from 3 to 8 p.m.," says a daylight patron. In the 'no skimping' Midwestern mindset, the plates aren't big enough for the portions, which makes you wonder how Pettis maintains his weight.

"Easy, I don't eat here," he jokes.

Pettis' also memorialises his family on his body. He has a tattoo of his father Eugene (a Puerto Rican), his mother Annette Garcia (of Mexican heritage), his two-year-old daughter Aria Idalis Pettis, and the word 'SHOWTIME' square across the shoulder blades. "Askren always jokes that I should save room in case I have another baby," Pettis says. "That any new family might get jealous."

Around him are all the hallmarks of success. He owns a bar. He owns area taekwondo gyms with his brother. There's a replica WEC belt above the bar along with other mementos. In a short time, he became a big fish in a small pond off the banks of Lake Michigan.

Once again, here's a case where MMA became a route to 'something more' for a kid who needed it — and for a man who still does.

"When you get in taekwondo, it teaches you the life skills of respect, self control, discipline — that's why I love it," Pettis says. "I really attribute those skills to really getting over my dad's death. If I didn't have that, I would have lost it."

Milwaukee's where he's from. Later on this evening he has to catch a plane to Hawaii to fulfill sponsorship appearances. In a week, he'll be in New York City getting the VIP treatment from the UFC. By the end of 2013, he hopes that he can add a UFC belt to the display case above his fireplace and a replica to sit on display in his bar. He is a man on the move.

"My career from the local shows to the WEC went by like that," he says. "My WEC career to my title shot was a year. I had four or five fights in one year. In two years, I went from never doing anything in the sport to champion, and it happened just like that."

And here, as if testing to see if it's all a dream, Showtime snaps his fingers. ☺

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BY JUSTIN M. NORTON // PHOTOS BY RAYMOND AHNER
(WWW.RAYMONDAHNER.COM)

Swayze Valentine sits by the cage door as two amateur fighters throw punches. The bout progresses before a fighter with what appears to be a broken nose submits to a rear naked choke; when he stands and the oxygen comes back to his brain, his nose releases a geyser of blood. Valentine runs into the cage, ice pack in hand, to check on him.

She will repeat this drill several times during the Tuff-N-Uff Memorial Day event in Las Vegas. There are multiple knockouts in this casino equestrian centre on Sunday night and a fair amount of blood. Valentine has been here before, including the time she mended a cut above an eyelid so deep that an entire epinephrine

swab fit in the wound. She isn't fazed by the injuries. "This is a fighter's livelihood and we want them to provide for their families," she says. "We try to give them one more round."

During a fight, the cutman is the only person who provides a moment of compassion. There is intimacy in a fight, but it is the intimacy of violence: the arm around the neck, the punch that snaps the head out of place, the commingled blood and sweat. The coach is there to counsel and motivate, detect flaws in strategy and dissect the other fighter's weaknesses. The cutman mends wounds, mops



"There seemed to be no greater honour than to take care of a fighter's hands..."

blood with a towel and holds an ice pack on swelling. There's a paradoxical nature to their work. While the doctor works to heal and mend, a successful cutman works to ensure a fighter can confront another three to five minutes of violence and uncertainty.

In the sometimes atavistic world of the cage, Valentine is one of the few friendly faces. After years of hard work, the 27-year-old mother of two is establishing herself as a cageside presence. UFC cutman Jacob 'Stitch' Duran has dubbed her 'The Queen Of Cuts'. She is finally getting paid for better gigs. But her seat at cage side – and the personal support from Stitch this evening in Vegas – wasn't guaranteed. She's still struggling to achieve her dream of becoming the first female cutwoman in the UFC. "This is a huge burden for my family," Valentine says. "I am living on bare minimum to hopefully achieve this dream. We're all chasing dreams. Some of us make it and some of us don't."

Finding your way into the trade is in some ways more challenging than climbing the ladder in the sport, even if it doesn't pose any physical challenges. Any MMA gym will accept membership and teach an arm bar; Darwinian logic ensures that the best, most committed athletes will rise. Becoming a cutman requires a mentor, and there aren't many of them. True, there are costly workshops that claim to teach you the tricks. But an apprenticeship where you truly learn the craft is like finding a shaman to instruct you on a hidden spiritual path. Valentine's search for a mentor was even more difficult because of her gender. "When I started there was no future for a cutwoman in fighting," Valentine says. "Learning this art isn't just about cuts or swelling. It's a package deal and it takes a journey."

Valentine didn't always want to work in MMA. In her early 20s, she worked as an animal specialist at a Petco in Anchorage, Alaska. She removed dead fish from tanks and was rebuffed in her multiple attempts to get a managerial position. "I believed I was one of the best workers in there," she says. "At one point, I sat down with my manager and asked 'what's wrong?' and he couldn't give me an answer." She realised that she had to find another path.

Like many who join the fighting family, she was wooed the first time she watched amateur MMA in person. Her first fight was an event put on by Alaska Fighting Championship in 2006. "I'd always been interested and would watch things on television. But the first time I went to an event, that's really what captured me," she says. "The atmosphere was incredible. It's just one of the most honest and true sports out there. But I didn't see any opportunities because I didn't want to fight."

She called a local promoter and asked if there was any way to help. She was told there was an opportunity – as a ring girl. She spent an evening parading around in a black string bikini top and booty shorts. "It was next to almost nothing," Valentine says, laughing. She had nothing against the job. But she didn't want to be a prop. She saw the coaches wrapping the hands of fighters that weekend and it caught her attention. "There seemed to be no greater honour than to take care of a fighter's hands, which are registered weapons," she says. "That's when I started doing my research."

Valentine worked for free. She went into schools and wrapped fighters' hands for sparring. She wrapped the hands of relatives and friends. In order for her to pursue her dream, she knew she needed to devote all of her attention to the craft. A divorce left her broke, however, and forced her and her sons to move in with her parents. Her vocational choice made things tougher. An apprentice cutman is paid small honourariums, if at all. Like fighters, the payoff comes when they make it big.

She broadened her net and started to work shows in Las Vegas and elsewhere. She called gyms and offered to work for



THE CUTMAN'S KIT

Here's what an expert cutman carries:

Gloves: Protects against blood and pathogens.

Vaseline: Greases a fighter's face and controls bleeding.

Swabs, dipped in epinephrine: Stops bleeding.

Iced Enswell: Controls swelling.

Towel: Cleans/dries a fighter before treatment.

free. At a charity fight in Vegas in 2011 she met cutman Adrian Rosenbusch, who was mentored by Stitch. Rosenbusch noticed something special about his future protégé – an emotional maturity and attention to the smallest details.

"One of the things that impressed me about Swayze is that she was willing to spend her own money just to be here," says Rosenbusch. "From the beginning, she was very professional and very hungry. I was wary because I've had a lot of people approach me to do this, but very few can. It takes a very special person. There are some intangible qualities."

The art of wrapping is the art of applying pressure. Too much and a fighter's hands constrict. Too little and bones break. A fighter's hands may bludgeon but are treated with the same care as china. With the proliferation of fighting styles, wrapping has become even more of an art. Each fighter might want their wraps customised for their fighting style. A grappler, for instance, might want slightly less pressure to allow them to use their hands for takedowns and clinching.

Before she wraps a hand, Valentine massages the hands. Then, she reinforces the wrist – an area that needs extra care because it is jarred when punching. She weaves the gauze around, expertly looping between the fingers. She later adds just the right amount of tape. When she is finished, the wrap feels as solid as a cast yet it's strangely pliable, almost an extension of your skin. "I got the repetition down pretty quick," she says. "But the biggest thing was

definitely pressure. It's a true art to find the pressure. You don't want their hands to fall asleep."

"You always have to look at someone's intentions," Rosenbusch says. "There are humbling beginnings. Can you get excited about bringing someone a drink of water? You have to want to be here for the right reasons and Swayze does."

The wrapping of hands is the symbolic moment when a fighter puts aside the world to attend to the difficult task ahead. Few have mastered the art, which is why you see the same faces backstage and during round breaks. If Valentine continues on her path, she could become one of the masters, one that elite fighters call on to wrap their hands and mend their wounds.

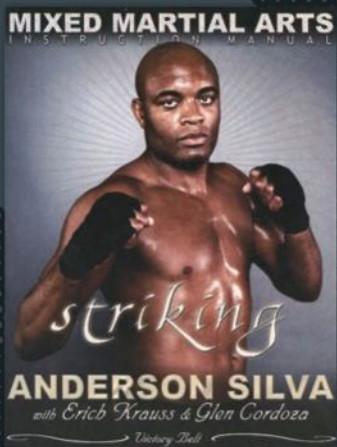
At the end of the fight card, Valentine packs her kit: gauze, enswell and swabs. It's been a long day. She'll return to Washington State tomorrow. When she gets back, her sons will probably be asleep. They don't know about the broken faces their mother fixes. It's still a fun game to them, albeit one with fists. "I tell them Mommy is going to go away to take care of the fighters. And they say, 'Are you going to go take care of the fighters when they play knuckles?'"

She'll kiss them both and get some sleep. The next day they won't talk much about the fights. She'll soon be flying somewhere else, and for time being, they are happy to have her home. ☺

ANDERSON SILVA

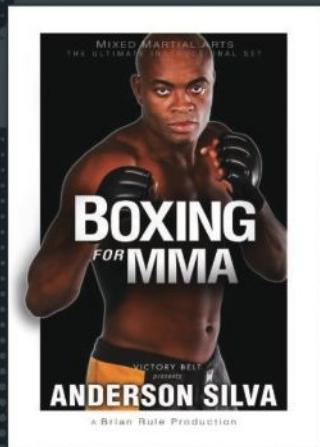
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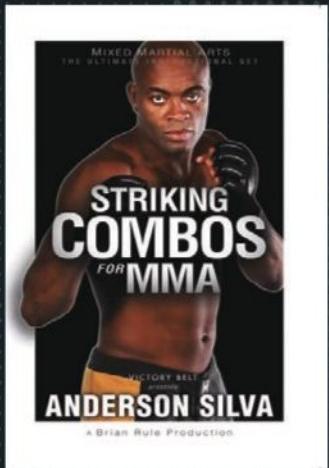
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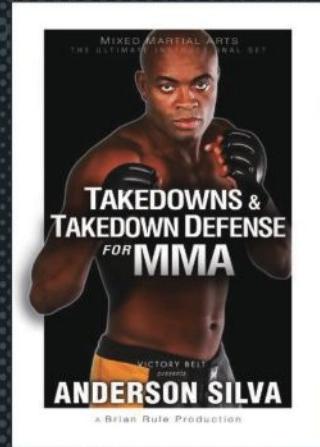
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TOO HOT TO HANDLE

It's been exactly two years since Kenda Perez graced the pages of *FIGHT!*, and believe us when we tell you, she missed us. Sure, we've been celebrating Kenda Perez Day on our own, but we had to check in to see how the *Maxim 'Hot 100'* was doing as the host of *The Best of Pride Fighting Championships* on Fuel TV and Bleacher Report's *The Ultimate Show*.

BY STEVEN MARROCCO // PHOTOS BY PAUL THATCHER

HAIR & MAKEUP BY NATASHA CHAIMBERLIN WARDROBE BY ERMELINDA MANOS
LOCATION COURTESY OF MICHAEL CRANDALL OF THE SIEGEL GROUP AND ARTISAN HOTEL BOUTIQUE

Looks like you've been busy the last two years?

I've been travelling a lot, filming, doing shoots, all that fun stuff. We are in our third season of *The Best of Pride*. It's all been filmed. I do some voiceover stuff in LA and Vegas and we film *The Ultimate Show* every Monday in Orange County. So that keeps me busy.

Do you like voiceover or hosting better?

Well, I definitely love being on camera, and I like interacting. *The Best of Pride* is more of a formal show, a stick-to-the-script kind of thing. With *The Ultimate Show*, we get to interact with fighters, visit their gyms, do little Twitter updates and stuff like that. It's a little more personal for me and I really enjoy that.

Why haven't we seen a Kenda blooper reel yet?

I'm sure they have more than enough footage. I'm kind of glad they haven't made one. When I get fighter's names wrong, I'm known to have a potty mouth. They could probably make a rap video of my cussing.

Yeah, let's autotune it. Is there a Kenda Perez R&B album coming out soon, Arianny style?

I'm definitely not trying to become a singer, but I do like to sing. Actually, just before you called me, I was singing 'Ciara'.

Is that what you put on when family comes over, or do you go with classical?

I am very eclectic with music. I love everything — country, '80s music, heavy metal, rap, R&B; I like all of it. It pretty much depends on my mood and who I'm around. But I literally love all of it. Even country. I know everyone says they love everything except country, but I like country, too. I got that from my dad.

Name five country artists that you listen to.

Randy Travis, who I think just had a stroke. Faith Hill. And then, of course... who else? You're testing my music skills. I can only name two. Sorry, I wasn't prepared.

Let's go Inside the Actor's Studio here. What's your favourite curse word?



“

There is not a Mr Kenda Perez. I have a little, furry Dexter around the house that keeps me pretty busy, but I'm single.

”



I say ‘fuck’ a lot. Do you have a beeper to beep that out?

Nah, we’re a magazine, we leave ‘em in. Speaking of magazines, *Maxim* is up for sale for \$20 million.

Oh wow, okay. Well, I do have that lying around. I’ll buy that.

How does the ‘Kenda Perez Hotties Contest’ sound to you?

To be the judge of these hotties, that’s a pretty important job. That’s stressful. I know thousands and thousands of girls submit their pictures every year, and there’s only a handful who actually get in. But I’m sure there’s somebody in that office who is enjoying every second of

it. I love *Maxim*. Just this past year, they had their annual *Maxim ‘Hot 100’*, where they rank all the celebrities, and we had a party in LA, and I got to be a part of that this year. [Kenda placed 92, between In-N-Out Burger heiress Lynsi Torres and *American Dreams’ Allison Williams*].

What’s a characteristic about said ‘Hotties’ that people wouldn’t expect?

I think a lot of people expect these gorgeous women to be really snobby and not cook and not be athletic, and I can’t speak for everybody, but that’s not necessarily true. A lot of them are down to earth and — as intimidated as you

might be of them — very approachable. And some of them even have wife skills — cleaning, cooking, and they take pride in working out. I know people don’t normally associate that; people just think everything falls at their feet.

We know you hate to work out, or so you told us a couple of years ago. Do you have wife skills?

I have never had a maid, so I’m very adamant about cleaning my own house, because I feel like if I don’t do it, it’s not done right. Anybody who knows me knows that the first thing I do when I come back from vacation is pull out my vacuum and Windex. I’m not saying



I'm the best cook, but I've taken some classes to up my skills.

So you say these 'Hot 100' girls are approachable. How does one approach?

For a guy to approach an attractive girl who they might be intimidated by, some guys take themselves way too seriously, and they're too focused on impressing a girl and what he's going on for himself. I think that's the worst approach ever. If a girl's going to like you, she's going to like you regardless. So for me, something that gets my attention is somebody who has a sense of humour and is funny and is willing to get turned down.

Is there a Mr Kenda Perez at home these days, or are you somehow still on the market?

There is not a Mr Kenda Perez. I have a little, furry Dexter around the house that keeps me pretty busy, but I'm single.

And by this you mean you have a dog named after the serial killer show?

He's my lady-killer. When I walk around, I get a lot of attention from a lot of girls.

So that's the secret to getting girls? It never hurts. ☺

You can catch Kenda on Bleacher Report's The Ultimate Show.





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